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*THE POEMS OF MASTER FRANCIS
VILLON OF PARIS.*





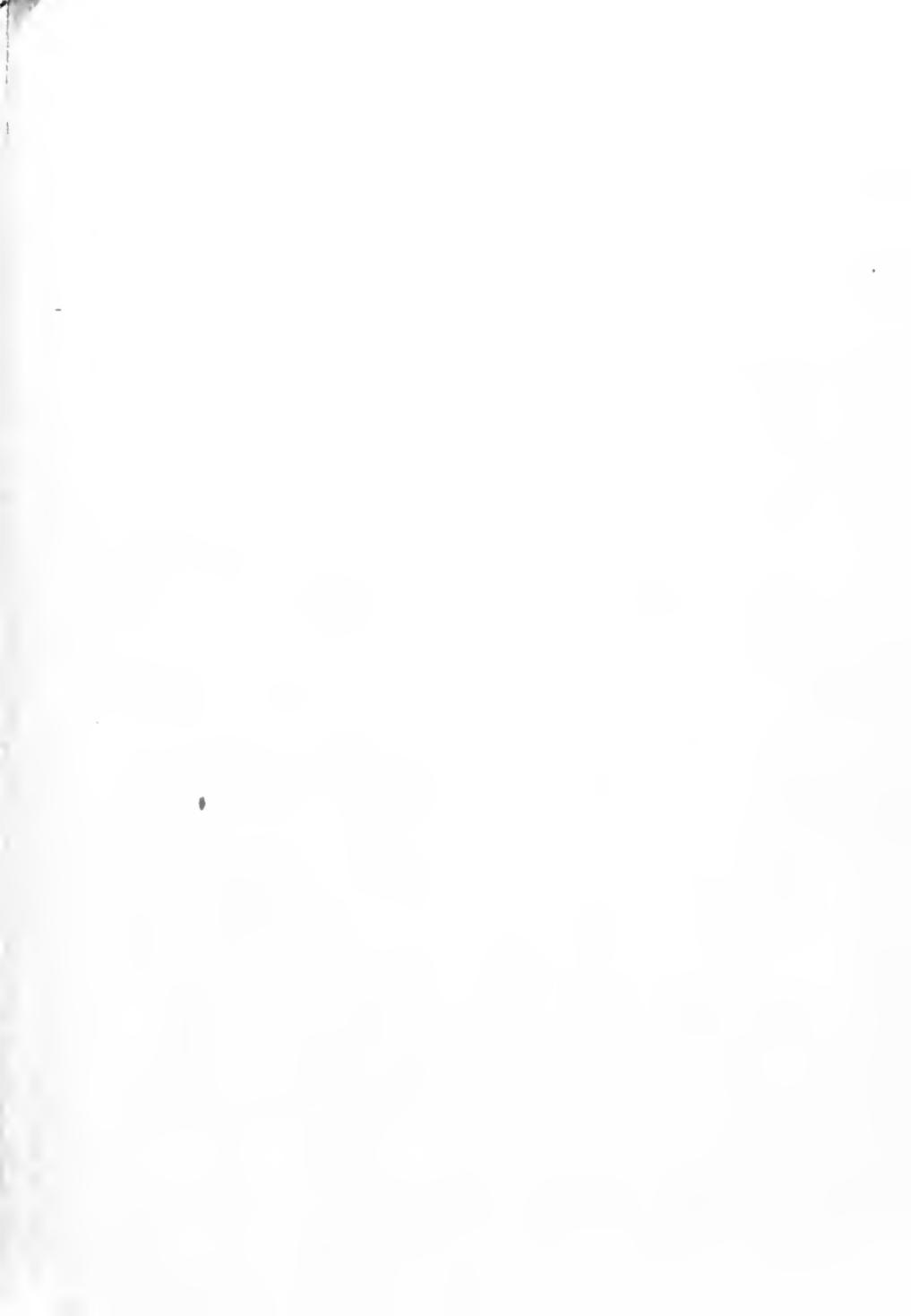
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*Woodcut from an Edition of the 15th Century. See Note at p. 178.
on the Epitaph in Ballad-form.*

THE POEMS OF MASTER FRANCIS
VILLON OF PARIS, NOW FIRST
DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE, IN
THE ORIGINAL FORMS, BY JOHN
PAYNE, AUTHOR OF 'THE MASQUE
OF SHADOWS,' 'INTAGLIOS,' 'SONGS
OF LIFE AND DEATH,' &c.

LONDON: PRINTED FOR THE VILLON SO-
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MUSEUM

05/10/2000

TO MY FRIEND
THÉODORE DE BANVILLE,
THE REVIVER OF THE
BALLAD.

b



BALLADE À JOHN PAYNE, TRADUCTEUR
DE VILLON.

A TOI salut, cher Payne ! En vers⁴ Anglais
Tu mets Villon, que notre vigne inspire ?
Entre les fous, aïeux de Rabelais,
O bons rythmeurs du pays de Shakspere,
Vous en pouviez, je crois, choisir un pire.
Ce doux railleur, au plaisir assidu,
N'aima rien tant que le fruit défendu ;
Son perruquier farouche était la brise,
Et son humeur celle d'un chien perdu.
Prenez Villon, c'est une bonne prise.

Ce vagabond, pareil aux feux-follets,
Contre la faim se débat et conspire.
Épris du luth moins⁵ que des flageolets,
C'est à charmer Jeanneton qu'il aspire ;
Un cabaret fut son joyeux empire.
Il se montrait, en son rire éperdu,
Si bon garçon qu'il fut presque pendu.
Chez les buveurs il obtint la maîtrise,
Humant le piot, toujours le cou tendu.
Prenez Villon, c'est une bonne prise.

*Il eut du fiel moins que les oiselets
Et l'églantier qui dans les bois respire,
Loin des bouffons de cour et des valets,
Que l'ennui mord ainsi qu'un noir vampire,
Il festoyait, fier comme un roi d'Epire,
Avec Margot sur la paille étendu,
Estimant fort son chignon bien tordu
Et son sein lourd aux rougeurs de cerise,
Il cajolait son cou ferme et dodu.
Prenez Villon, c'est une bonne prise.*

ENVOI.

*La soif l'avait en plein gosier mordu,
Et par surcroit il fut esclave du
Cruel archer qui tous nous martyrisa,
Il s'en allait, comme un compas fendu,
Prenez Villon, c'est une bonne prise.*

THÉODORE DE BANVILLE.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
B ALLADE à John Payne, par Théodore de Banville	xi
Biographical Note	xix
The Lesser Testament of Master Francis Villon	1
The Greater Testament of Master Francis Villon, containing :	
Stanzas i.-xli.	21
Ballad of Old-Time Ladies	38
Ballad of Old-Time Lords, No. 1	39
Ballad of Old-Time Lords, No. 2	41
Stanzas xlii.-xlii.	42
The Complaint of the Fair Helm-maker grown old .	45
The Doctrine of the Fair Helm-maker to the Light o' Loves	49
Stanzas xlvii.-liv.	50
Double Ballad (of Light Loves)	54
Stanzas lv.-lxxix.	56
Ballad that Villon made for his Mother, &c. . .	67
Stanzas lxxx.-lxxxiii.	69
Ballad of Villon to his Mistress	70
Stanza lxxxiv.	72
Lay, or rather Rondeau (To Death)	72
Stanzas lxxxv.-cxv.	73

	PAGE
The Greater Testament (<i>continued</i>):	
Ballad and Orison (For Master Cotard's Soul)	85
Stanzas cxvi.-cxxix.	87
Ballad for a newly-married Gentleman	93
Stanzas cxxx.-i.	94
Ballad of Slanderous Tongues	95
Stanzas cxxxii.-iii.	97
Ballad : Counterblast to Franc-Gontier	98
Stanza cxxxiv.	100
Ballad of the Women of Paris	100
Stanzas cxxxv.-cxl.	102
Ballad of Villon and la Grosse Margot	104
Stanzas cxli.-v.	106
Seemly Lesson to the Good-for-noughts	108
Ballad of good Doctrine to those of ill Life	110
Stanzas cxlvi.-cli.	111
Lay, or rather Rondeau (For the Dead)	114
Stanzas cliii.-clxv.	115
Rondel (Requiem)	120
Stanzas clxvi.-clxxiii.	121
Ballad crying all Folk mercy	124
Ballad (final)	126
Divers Poems :	
Ballad of Villon in Prison	131
Epitaph (Quatrain)	133
Variant	133
Epitaph in Ballad-form	134
Ballad : Request to the Court of Parliament	136
Ballad of Villon's Appeal	138

	PAGE
Divers Poems (<i>continued</i>):	
Ballad of Proverbs	139
Ballad of Things known and unknown	141
Ballad of Poor Cutpurses	142
Ballad of Fortune	144
Ballad of French Honour	146
Ballad of the Debate of the Heart and Body of Villon	148
Ballad written by Villon upon a Subject proposed by Charles Duc d'Orleans	151
Ballad of Villon's Request to the Duc de Bourbon .	153
Poems attributed to Villon :	
Rondel	157
A merry Ballad of Vintners	158
Ballad of the Tree of Love	160
Ballad of Ladies' Love, No. 1	162
Ballad of Ladies' Love, No. 2	164
Notes :	
Notes to the Lesser Testament	170
Notes to the Greater Testament	172
Notes to Divers and Sundry Poems	178
Facsimiles	181

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

FRANÇOIS DE MONTCORBIER, better known as Villon, was born in the summer of 1431 (the year of the death of Joan of Arc), of poor but well-connected parents, at one of the villages in the vicinity of Paris. He appears to have been early adopted by a rich ecclesiastic named Guillaume de Villon, whose name he took and at whose expense he followed the courses of the University of Paris, where he graduated as Bachelor of Arts in March 1450 and as Licentiate in Theology and Master of Arts in the summer of 1452. The Maîtrise of Theology, the probable ultimate aim of his studies, he never obtained. He was, in all probability, intended for the Church; but his Bohemian disposition and dissolute habits prevented him from following this career and early hurried him into disreputable associations, which proved the ruin of his life. The persons who seem to have had the greatest influence over his life were two of his fellow-students, René or Regnier de Montigny and Colin de Cayeulx, both of whom early

became celebrated as notorious criminals and met with an infamous end at the hands of justice, the first being hanged and the second broken on the wheel, in Villon's own lifetime. An unfortunate love-affair with Katherine de Vaucelles (or Vaucel), a young lady in Villon's own rank of life, whose acquaintance he contracted during his residence at the University, seems also to have had its share in blighting his prospects, and to this he himself indeed attributes all his misfortunes. Although this early part of his life was undoubtedly spent in all kinds of debauchery and dissipation, Villon appears to have kept clear, if not of crime, at all events of actual collision with the criminal authorities, until the month of June 1455, when he had the misfortune to kill, in self-defence, an ecclesiastic called Philippe Chermoye or Sermoyse, who had brutally forced a quarrel on him, probably on account of Katherine de Vaucelles. In consequence of this he fled from Paris and was tried and outlawed in his absence ; but in January 1456, we find a free pardon granted to him by Charles VII. The six months of his exile had, however, forced him into closer connection with the bands of thieves and vagabonds among whom they had been spent, and he now became an active member

of the gang to which Montigny, Cayeulx and Guy Tabarie (mentioned in the Greater Testament, stanza lxxviii.) belonged. In their company, he appears to have assisted in numerous robberies, and finally, shortly before Christmas 1456, in a burglary upon the Collège de Navarre at Paris, where his intimate knowledge of the internal arrangements of the College (in which he had attended the University courses) and the lockpicking talents of Colin de Cayeulx enabled the confederates to plunder the treasury of a sum of five or six hundred gold crowns. Immediately after this exploit, Villon set out for Angers in Anjou, where he had an uncle residing in a convent, not (as he himself pretends in his Lesser Testament) as a matter of voluntary exile, to seek distraction from the unkindness of Katherine de Vaucelles, but (as appears from the judicial records of the time) for the purpose of preparing the way for a professional operation upon the goods of a rich priest of that town. In his absence, owing to the drunken boastfulness of Guy Tabarie, the police got wind of the authors of the burglary. Tabarie was arrested and put to the torture, under which he made a full confession, implicating the whole of the band and naming Villon as one of the chiefs. In consequence, several members

of the band were arrested, and so (after a considerable delay, caused by his stay in the provinces) was Villon himself, who was with five companions tried and condemned to be hanged. From this judgment he appealed to the Parliament, which (probably determined by the intervention of the Dukes of Bourbon, Burgundy and Orleans or others of the powerful friends whom the witty devil-may-care poet had contrived to make for himself) commuted the sentence to perpetual banishment from the kingdom. Villon accordingly retired to the town of Rousillon in Dauphiné, a possession of the Seneschal de Bourbon, which he appears to have made his head-quarters during the time of his exile, and we hear nothing more of him till 1461. In the mean time he seems to have gradually again ventured into France and probably renewed his connection with the old gang, some of whose members (notably Colin de Cayeulx, whose last and fatal exploit occurred at Montpippeau, near Orleans) may be supposed to have eluded the vigilance of the Parisian police and to have been still at large in the provinces; for in the early part of that year, we find him again arrested for (it is said) the theft of a silver lamp belonging to the church of Baccon, near Orleans. After having been examined

before the tribunal of the Bishop of Orleans (that Jacques Thibault d'Aussigny upon whose head he pours such vials of bitterness in the *Greater Testament*), he was thrown into a dismal dungeon in the Castle of Meung-sur-Loire, where he languished for several months, presumably under sentence of death and in the most miserable condition. In July 1461 the old King, Charles VII., died ; and on the 2nd October following, his successor, Louis XI., remitted Villon's penalty and ordered his release by letters of grace dated at Meung, where he appears to have been passing on his royal progress 'de joyeux avénement.' On his release, Villon at once returned to Paris, where we find him at the close of the year composing his capital work, 'The Greater Testament.' After this date (1461) complete darkness settles for us over the poet's fate. From internal evidence in his poems, it seems probable that he survived for a time, although certainly not for more than two or three years, as there is no doubt that he had contracted in the terrible water-dungeon of Meung the seeds of some disease in the nature of consumption, which, acting upon a frame already enfeebled by hardship and dissipation, must have speedily brought him to the brink of the grave.

THE LESSER TESTAMENT.

B

et cetera

Here beginneth the Lesser Testament of Master Francis
Villon.

I.

THIS fourteen six and fiftieth year,
I Francis Villon, clerk that be,
Considering, with senses clear,
Bit betwixt teeth and collar-free,
That one must needs look orderly
Unto his works (as counselleth
Vegetius, wise Roman he),
Or else perforce one wandereth,—

II.

In this year, as before I said,
Hard by the dead of Christmas-time,
When upon wind the wolves are fed,
And for the rigour of the rime
One hugs the hearth from none to prime,
Wish came to me to break the stress
Of that most dolorous prison-clime
Wherein Love held me in duresse.

III.

Unto this fashion am I bent,
 Seeing my lady, in my eyes,
To my undoing give consent,
 Sans gain to her in anywise :
Whereof I plain me to the skies,
 Requiring vengeance (her desert)
 Of all the gods with whom it lies,
And of Love, healing for my hurt.

IV.

Wherefore, the past considering,
 I am through smitten with fierce pain ;
For of each sweet and pleasant thing,
 Whereto of old my heart was fain,
 Alas ! but memories remain,
That come to me with dusty feet :
 Needs must I plant with other grain,
And seek new shelter from the heat.

V.

She that hath bound me with her eyes
 (Alack, how fierce and fell to me !),
Without my fault in anywise,
 Wills and ordains that I should dree

Death, and leave life and liberty.
Help see I none, save flight alone :
She breaks the bonds 'twixt her and me,
And will not hear my piteous moan.

VI.

To 'scape the ills that hem me round,
It were the wiser to départ.
Adieu ! To Angers I am bound,
Since she I love will nor impart
Her grace nor any of her heart.
I die—with body whole enough—
For her ; a martyr to Love's smart,
Enrolled among the saints thereof.

VII.

How sad soe'er may absence prove
(Ah, my poor heart !), needs must I take
My weary way from life and love.
No wolf was aye in Boulogne brake
Impatient more his thirst to slake
Or hungered more than for love I.
Would God might pity on me take,
For my heart irks me like to die.

VIII.

And since (need being on me laid)
I go, and haply never may
Again return (not being made
Of steel or bronze, or other way
Than other men : life but a day
Lasteth, and death knows no relent),
For me, I journey far away ;
Wherefore I make this Testament.

IX.

First, in the name of God the Lord,
The Son's and Holy Spirit's name,
And in Her name by whose accord
None perish that do Her acclaim,
I leave (if God so please) my fame
To William Villon, and no less
My tents and banners to the same,
For the name's honour and noblesse.

X.

Item, to her the aforesaid,
That has exiled me from Love's fold
So harshly that my peace is dead
And all delight in me is cold,

I leave my heart, enchased in gold,
Piteous and withered for dismay :
She to this misery me cajoled ;
God pardon it to her, I pray !

xi.

Item, my crooked sword of steel
I leave to Master Ythier,
Merchant—to whom myself I feel
Much bound—in order that he may,
According to my will, defray
The scot for which in pawn it lies
(Six sols), and then the sword convey
To John o' Horns, free of all price.

xii.

Item, I leave to Saint Amand
The Mule, and eke the Charger White ;
And to Blaru, the Diamond
And Jibbing Ass with stripes bedight ;
And the Decretal, too, that hight
Omnis utrius—that, to wit,
That doth the Carmelites indict—
Unto the priests I do commit.

xiii.

Item, I leave unto Jehan Tronne,
Butcher, my sheep, fat and well fed,
And whisk for flies that settle on
His beef, with roses garlanded,
Or cow at which all shake the head.
The churl that has the sheep in field
Let him be strangled till he's dead,
If he refuse the beast to yield.

xiv.

To Master Robert Vallée (who,
Poor clerkling to the Parliament,
Owns mount nor valley, old or new)
I do by this my Testament
My breeches one and all present
That in the wardrobe hang, that he
May clothe therewith ('tis my intent)
His mistress Jane more decently.

xv.

And since he is well born and bred,
God-fearing and of life upright,
Though poor of wit and little read,
I have bethought me how I might

Assist the foolish honest wight ;
So give my Art of Memory
To him, since, if I read him right,
No more sense than a log has he.

xvi.

And thirdly, for the livelihood
Of Māster Robert aforesaid
(My heirs, for God's sake make it good !)
Be money of my hauberk made,
And let the proceeds be outlaid,
Ere Easter fall, in purchasing
(Hard by St. Jacques) a shop and trade
For the poor witless lawyerling.

xvii.

Item, my gloves and silken hood
My friend Jacques Cardon, I declare,
Shall have in fair free gift for good ;
Also the acorns willows bear,
And every day a capon fair
Or goose ; likewise a tenfold vat
Of sound white wine, and to his share
Two lawsuits, lest he wax too fat.

XVIII.

Item, three dogs I hereby give
To young René de Montigny ;
And let Jehan Raguyer receive
One hundred francs, by way of fee,
Levied on all my property.
But softly : haply I do ill ;
One may be sometimes overfree
At one's expense one's friends to fill.

XIX.

Item, to Baron de Grigny
The ward and castle of Nygeon,
And six dogs more than Montigny,
And Bicêtre, castle and donjon ;
And to that treacherous thief Changon,
That lies in wait to stir up strife,
Three strokes of withy well laid on,
And prison-lodging all his life.

XX.

Item, unto Jacques Raguyer
I leave the 'Puppet' wine-shop, there
At leisure with his wench to play ;
Also I give him choice of fare

At the Pineapple Tavern, where
He may sit cosy at his ease,
Feet to the fire and back to chair,
And hug his doxy on his knees.

XXI.

Item, to John the foul of face
And Peter Tanner I devise,
By way of gift, that baron's grace
That punishes all felonies ;
To Fournier, my proctor wise,
Leather cut out for caps and shoes,
That now at the cordwainer's lies,
For him in winter time to use.

XXII.

Unto the Captain of the Watch
I give a helmet, vizor close ;
And to his men, that lift up latch
And in each corner poke their nose,
I leave two splendid rubies, those
That give light over the gateway,
Where if they caught me they'd enclose—
I mean, in quod at the Châtelet.

xxiii.

Item, to Pernet I bequeath
(Bastard of Bar by sobriquet,
Because right well he chaffereth)
Three apronsful of straw or hay,
Upon the naked floor to lay,
Thereon his amorous trade to ply,
For he knows not another way
Or art to get his living by.

xxiv.

Item, to Chollet I bequeath
And Wolf, a duck, once in a way
Caught as of old the walls beneath
Upon the moat, towards end of day ;
And each a friar's gown of gray—
Those that fall down beneath the knees—
My boots with uppers worn away,
And charcoal, wood, bacon and peas.

xxv.

Item, this trust I do declare
For three poor children named below :
Three little orphans weak and bare,
That hungry and barefooted go,

And naked to all winds that blow ;
That they may be provided for,
And sheltered from the rain and snow,
At least until this winter's o'er.

XXVI.

To Colin Laurens, Jehan Moreau
And Girard Gossain, stripped and bare
Of goods and parents long ago,
Having no helper anywhere,
I leave, at option, each a share
Of goods or else four crowns of gold.
Full merrily they thus shall fare,
Poor little souls, when I am cold.

XXVII.

Item, my right of nomination
Holden of the University,
I leave, by way of resignation,
To rescue from adversity
Poor clerks that are of Paris see,—
Under this rubric, understand ;
Pity thereto incited me,
Seeing them naked as my hand.

XXVIII.

Their names are Thibault de Vitry
And Guillaume Cotin—peaceable
Poor wights, that humble scholars be.
Latin they feathly speak and spell,
And at the lectern sing right well.
I do devise to them in fee
(Till better fortune with them dwell)
A rent-charge on the pillory.

XXIX.

Item, the house in Anthony Street
Unto their use I do ordain ;
Also the stick wherewith they beat,
And every day full pot of Seine,
To those that in the trap are ta'en,
Bound hand and foot in close duresse ;
Also my looking-glass, to gain
The good grace of the gaoleress.

XXX.

Item, I leave the hospitals
My curtains spun the spiders by ;
And to the lodgers 'neath the stalls
Each one a plaster on the eye,

And grace to tremble, groan and sigh,
With woeful mien and piteous face,
To crawl along as like to die,
With tattered rags and halting pace.

XXXI.

Unto my barber I commit
The ends and clippings of my hair,
Without deduction, every whit :
I give my old boots, every pair,
Unto my cobbler, and declare
My clothes my tailor's, so these two
May when I'm dead my leavings share,
For less than what they cost when new.

XXXII.

Item, the begging Orders four,
The nuns and sisters, white and gray,
I leave fat capons and good store
Of poult and pigeons every day,
And bread galore, provided they
The 'fifteen signs' preach and declare :
Monks get our wives with child, folk say,
But that is none of my affair.

XXXIII.

To John o' Guard, that grocer hight,
 The golden mortar I make o'er,
 That he may grind his spice aright—
 Also a pestle from St. Maur ;
 And unto him that goes before,
 To lay one by the legs in quod,
 St. Anthony roast him full sore !
 I'll leave him nothing else, by God.

XXXIV.

Item, to Mairebeuf, as well
 As Nicholas de Louvieux,
 Each one I give a whole eggshell
 Brimful of crowns and nobles new ;
 As to the warders of Gouvieux,
 Peter de Ronseville I pray
 To share amongst them what is due
 When prince or princess comes that way.

XXXV.

Finally, being here alone
 To-night, and in good trim to write,
 I heard the clock of the Sorbonne,
 That aye at nine o'clock of night

Is wont the Angelus to smite:
Then I my task did intermit,
That to our Lady mild I might
Do suit and service, as is fit.

XXXVI.

Done at the season aforesaid
Of the right well-renowned Villon,
Who eats nor white nor oaten bread,
Thin as a broomstick, shrunk and wan.
Tents and pavilions every one
He's left to one or t'other friend ;
All but a little money's gone,
That will, ere long, come to an end.

Here endeth the Lesser Testament of Master Francis
Villon.

THE GREATER TESTAMENT.

Here beginneth the Greater Testament of Master
Franeis Villon.

I.

IN the year thirty of my age,
Wherein I've drunk so deep of shame,
Neither all fool nor yet all sage,
For all my misery and blame—
Which latter all upon me came
Through Bishop Thibault d'Aussigny
(If bishop such an one folk name ;
At all events, he's none for me :

II.

He's nor my bishop nor my lord ;
I hold of him nor land nor fee,
Owe him nor homage nor award,
Am nor his churl nor beast, perdie).
A summer-long he nourished me
Upon cold water and dry bread ;
God do by him as he by me,
Whom passing scurvily he fed !

III.

If any should begin to say
I do miscall him—I say no :
I wrong him not in any way,
If one aread me rightly. Lo !
Here's all I say, nor less nor mo ;
If he had mercy on my dole,
May Christ in heaven like mercy show
Unto his body and his soul !

IV.

And if he wrought me pain and ill
More than herein I do relate,
God of His grace to him fulfil
Like measure and proportionate !
But the Church bids us not to hate,
But to pray rather for our foes :
I'll own I'm wrong, and leave his fate
To God that all things can and knows.

V.

And pray for him I will, to boot,
By Master Cotard's soul I swear !
But soft : 'twill then be but by rote,
For, in good sooth, I'm ill at prayer ;

'Twould be but such as Picards' were
(If what I mean he do not know—
Ere 'tis too late to learn it there—
To Lille or Douai let him go).

vi.

However urgently ask I
That folk on his behalf should pray,
(Though I proclaim it not on high)
Don't read me in too strict a way.
When such a prayer as this to say,
I take the book in hand for him,
I choose the seventh verse alway
Of the Psalm called 'Deus laudem.'

vii.

I DO implore God's blessèd Son,
To whom I turn in every need,
That haply my poor orison
Find grace with Him—from whom indeed
Body and soul I hold—that freed
Me oft from blame and evil chance.
Praised be our Lady and her Seed,
And Louis the good King of France !

VIII.

Whom God with Jacob's luck endow,
And glory of great Solomon !
Of doughtiness he has enow,
In sooth, and of dominion.
In all the lands the sun shines on,
In this our world of night and day,
God grant his fame and memory wonne
As long as lived Methusaleh !

IX.

May twelve fair sons perpetuate
His royal lineage, one and all
As valorous as Charles the Great,
Conceived in matrix conjugal,
As doughty as Saint Martial !
The gentle Dauphin fare likewise ;
No worser fortune him befall
Than this ; and after, Paradise !

X.

FEELING my self upon the wane,
Even more in goods than body spent,
Whilst that my senses I retain,
What little God to me has sent
(For on no other have I leant),
I have set down of my last will
This very stable Testament,
Alone and irrevocable,

XI.

Written in the same year, sixty-one,
Wherein the good king set me free
From the dour prison of Mehun,
And so to life recovered me :
Whence I to him shall bounden be
As long as life in me fail not :
I serve him until dead be he ;
Good deeds should never be forgot.

Here beginneth Villon to enter into matter full of erudition and of fair knowledge.

XII.

NOW is it true that, after years
Of anguish and of sorrowing,
Marked and made sad with many tears
And mickle weary travailing,
Trouble hath wrought in me to bring
To point each sense and sentiment,
Teaching me many another thing
Than Averrhœs his Comment.

XIII.

However, at my trials' worst,
When wandering in the desert ways,
God, that the Emmäus pilgrims erst
Did comfort, as the Gospel says,
Showed me a certain resting-place,
And gave me gift of hope no less ;
Tho' vile the sinner be and base,
Nothing God hates save stubbornness.

xiv.

Sinned have I oft, as well I know ;
But God my death doth not require,
But that I turn from sin, and so
Win ransom from perdition's fire.
Whether one by sincere desire
Or counsel turn unto the Lord,
He sees, and casting off His ire,
Grace to repentance doth accord.

xv.

And as of its own motion shows,
In the commencing rhymes of it,
The noble Romaunt of the Rose,
Youth to the young one should remit,
So manhood do mature the wit.
And there, alack ! the song says sooth :
Those that such snares for me have knit
Would have me die in time of youth.

xvi.

If through my death the public weal
Might anywise embettered be,
Death my own hand to me should deal
As felon, so God 'stablish me !

But unto none, that I can see,
 Hindrance I do, alive or dead;
 The hills, for one poor wight, perdie,
 Will not be stirred out of their stead.

XVII.

WHILOM, when Alexander reigned,
 A man that hight Diomedes
 Before the emperor was arraigned,
 Chained hand and foot, like as one sees
 A thief. A skimmer of the seas
 He was, of those that rob and reive
 Upon the ocean. One of these
 They brought his death-doom to receive.

XVIII.

The emperor bespake him thus :
 ‘ Why art thou a sea-plunderer ? ’
 The other, no wise timorous :
 ‘ Why dost thou call me plunderer, sir ?
 Is it, perchance, because I scour
 Upon so mean a bark the sea ?
 Could I but arm me with thy power,
 I would be emperor like to thee.

xix.

‘What wouldst thou have? From sorry Fate,
That has against me such a spite,
The which I no wise can abate,
Arises this my evil plight.
Let me find favour in thy sight,
And know the wisdom of this saw:
In penury is much unright;
Necessity knows no man’s law.’

xx.

Whenas the emperor to his say
Had hearkened, much he wonderèd;
And ‘I will thine ill luck convey
From bad to good,’ to him he said;
And did. Thenceforward Diomed
From noble life did never bate.
Thus have I in Valerius read,
That was of Rome surnamed the Great.

xxi.

If God had granted me to find
A king alike compassionate,
That had to me fair fate assigned,
If I should prove a renegade

Thenceforward, I would judge my fate
To be the death by fire at stake.
Necessity leads folk to hate,
As want drives wolves out of the brake.

XXII.

MY time of youth I do bewail,
That more than most lived merrily,
Until old age 'gan me assail,
For youth had passed unconsciously.
It wended not afoot from me,
Nor yet on horseback. Ah, how then ?
It fled away all suddenly,
And never will return again.

XXIII.

It's gone, and I am left behind,
Poor both in body and in wit,
Sad and forlorn, and weak as wind ;
Coin, land and goods, gone every whit.
And all by kindred to me knit,
Forgetting natural affect,
To disavow me have seen fit,
Seeing my every fortune wreck.

XXIV.

Yet have I not my living spent
On gourmandise or gluttony,
Nor thorow love that I repent :
None is there can reproach it me,
Except he rue it bitterly ;
I say, without untruthfulness—
From this you cannot make me flee—
Who's done no wrong should none confess.

XXV.

True is it I have loved whilere,
And willingly would love again :
But aching heart, and paunch that ne'er
Doth half its complement contain,
The ways of Love allure in vain.
For none but he its sweets may prove
Whose well-filled stomach wags amain ;
Hunger was fatal aye to love.

XXVI.

If in my time of youth, alack !
I had but studied and been sage,
Nor wandered from the beaten track,
I had slept warm in my old age.

But what did I? As bird from cage,
I fled from school: and now with pain,
In setting down this on the page,
My heart is well-nigh cleft in twain.

XXVII.

I have construed what Solomon
Intended, with too much largesse,
When that he said, ‘ Rejoice, my son,
In thy fair youth and lustiness :
But still to wisdom thee address ;
For youth and adolescence be’
(These are his words, nor more nor less)
‘ But ignorance and vanity.’

XXVIII.

Like as the loose threads on the loom,
Whenas the weaver to them lays
The flaming tow, burn and consume,
So that from ragged ends (Job says)
The web is freed,—even so my days
Have fled and vanished past recall.
No pain nor travail me affrays,
For death shall set me free from all.’

xxix.

WHERE are the gracious gallants now
That of old time I did frequent,
So fair of fashion and of show,
In song and speech so excellent ?
Stark dead are some, their lives are spent ;
There rests of them nor mark nor trace :
May they in Heaven find content !
God have the others in His grace !

xxx.

Some, Christ-a-mercy, have become
Masters and lords and great of grace ;
Some beg barefoot, and see no crumb
Of bread save in some window-place ;
Others the tonsure did embrace,
That now fat lives in convent spend,
Well shod and clad and sleek of face :
Of some of them this is the end.

xxxi.

God to good deeds great lords incite,
That live in luxury and ease !
We cannot aught in them set right ;
So will do well to hold our peace.

But to the poor (like me), that cease
Never from want, God patience give !
For they require it ; and not these,
That have the wherewithal to live,—

XXXII.

That drink of noble wines and eat
Fish, soups and sauces every day,
Pasties and boiled and roasted meat,
And eggs served up in many a way.
Therein from masons differ they,
That with such toil their bread do earn :
These need no cupbearer, they say,
For each one pours out in his turn.

XXXIII.

TO this digression I've been led,
That serves in nothing my intent.
I am no Court, empanellèd
For quittance or for punishment ;
I am of all least diligent.
Praised be Christ ! May each man's need
By me of Him have full content !—
That which is writ is writ indeed.

XXXIV.

So let that kite hang on the wall,
And of more pleasing subjects treat ;
For this finds favour not with all,
Being wearisome and all unsweet :
For poverty doth groan and greet,
Full of despite and strife alway ;
Is apt to say sharp things in heat,
Or think them, if it spare to say.

XXXV.

POOR was I from my earliest youth,
Born of a poor and humble race :
My sire was never rich, in sooth,
Nor yet his ancestor Erace :
Want follows hard upon our trace ;
Nor on my forbears' tombs, I ween,
(Whose souls the love of God embrace !)
Are crowns or sceptres to be seen.

XXXVI.

When I of poverty complain,
Ofttimes my heart to me hath said,
' Man, wherefore grumble thus in vain ?
If thou hast no such plentihead

As Jacques Cœur, think of this instead :
Better to live and rags to wear
Than to have been a lord, and dead,
Rot in a splendid sepulchre.'

XXXVII.

(Than to have been a lord ! I say.
Alas ! no longer is he one ;
As the Psalm tells of it,—to-day
His place of men is all unknown.)
As to the rest, affair 'tis none
Of mine, that but a sinner be :
To theologians alone
The case belongs, and not to me.

XXXVIII.

For I am not, as well I know,
An angel's son, that crowned with light
Among the starry heavens doth go :
My sire is dead—God have his spright !
His body's buried out of sight.
I know my mother too must die—
She knows it too, poor soul, aright—
And soon her son by her must lie.

XXXIX.

I know full well that rich and poor,
Villein and noble, high and low,
Laymen and clerks, gracious and dour,
Wise men and foolish, sweet of show
Or foul of favour, less or mo,
Of what condition, great or small,
They be,—Death (but too well I know)
Without exception seizes all.

XL.

Paris or Helen though one be,
Whoever dies, in pain and dread
For lack of breath and blood dies he ;
His gall upon his heart is shed ;
Then doth he sweat, God knows how dread
A sweat, and none may give him aid ;
For there is no one in his stead
By whom death's debit may be paid.

XLI.

Death makes him shiver and turn pale,
Sharpens his nose, his veins doth swell,
Stretches his neck, makes his flesh fail,
And strains his joints and nerves as well :

E'en women's bodies, gent and snell,
That are as white and soft as snow,
 You too must bear these pangs of hell,
Or all alive to heaven go.

BALLAD OF OLD-TIME LADIES.

I.

TELL me in what land of shade
 Dwells fair Flora of Rome, and where
Do Thaïs and Archipiade
 Hide from the middle modern air ?
And Echo, more than mortal fair,
 That, when one calls by river flow
 Or marish, answers here and there ?
But what has become of last year's snow ?

II.

Where is Héloïsa the staid,
 For whose sake Abelard did not spare
(Such dole for love on him was laid)
 Manhood to lose and a cowl to wear ?
And where is the queen whose orders were
 That Buridan, tied in a sack, should go
 Floating down Seine from the turret-stair ?
But what has become of last year's snow ?

III.

*Blanche, too, the lily-white queen, that made
Sweet music as if she a siren were ;
Flat-foot Bertha ; and Joan the maid,
The good Lorrainer, the English bare
Captive to Rouen, and burned her there ;
Beatrix, Eremburge, Alys,—lo !
Where are they, sovereign virgin, where ?
But what has become of last year's snow ?*

ENVOI.

*Prince, you shall never question where
They are, this week nor this year, I trow.
Except the answer this burden bear,
But what has become of last year's snow ?*

BALLAD OF OLD-TIME LORDS

(FOLLOWING ON THE SAME SUBJECT).

No. I.

I.

WHERE is Calixtus, third of the name,
That died in the purple long ago,
Four years since he to the tiar came ?
And the King of Aragon, Alfonso ?

*The Duke of Bourbon, sweet of show,
And the Duke Arthur of Brittaine ?
And Charles that all as the good king know ?
But where is the doughty Charlemaine ?*

II.

*Likewise the King of Scots, whose shame
Was the half of his face (or folk say so)
Vermeil as amethyst held to the flame,
From chin to forehead all in a glow ?
The King of Cyprus, of high and low
Renowned ; and the gentle King of Spain,
Whose name, alas, I do not know ?
But where is the doughty Charlemaine ?*

III.

*Of many more might I ask the same,
That are but dust that the breezes blow ;
But I desist, for none may claim
To stand against Death, that lays all low.
Yet one more question before I go :
Where is Lancelot King of Behaine ?
And where are his ancestors ? Even so :
But where is the doughty Charlemaine ?*

ENVOL.

*Where is Du Guesclin? Doth any know?
 Where is the Dauphin of Auvergne ta'en?
 Where is Alençon's good duke? Lo!
 But where is the doughty Charlemaine?*

BALLAD OF OLD-TIME LORDS.

No. 2.

I.

WHERE are the holy apostles gone,
 Vestured with albs and silken stoled,
 That hooded were with amice alone,
 The laying on of whose hands controlled
 The folk upon whom the fiend had hold?
 All must come to the self-same bay;
 Sons and servants, their days are told:
 The wind carries them all away.

II.

*Where is he now that held the throne
 Of Constantine with the hands of gold?
 And the King of France, whose name is known
 Over all kings as great and bold,—*

*That builded cathedrals manifold,
That he unto God might homage pay ?
Availeth not honour they had of old :
The wind carries them all away.*

III.

*Where are the champions every one,
The Dauphins, the counsellors young and old ?
The barons of Salins, Dôl, Dijon,
Vienne, Grenoble ? They all are cold.
Or take the folk under their banners enrolled,—
Pursuivants, trumpeters, heralds,—say,
Where are they now but under the mould ?
The wind carries them all away.*

ENVOI.

*Princes to death are all foretold,
Even as the humblest of their array :
Whether they sorrow or whether they scold,
The wind carries them all away.*

XLII.

SINCE then, popes, princes great and small,
That in queens' wombs conceivèd were,
Are dead and buried, one and all,
And other heads their crownals wear,

Shall Death to smite poor me forbear ?
Shall I not die ? Ay, if God will.
So that of life I have my share,
An honest death I take not ill.

XLIII.

This world is not perpetual,
Deem the rich robber what he may :
To death subjected are we all.
Old men to heart this comfort lay,
That had repute in their young day
Of being quick at jest and flout,—
Whom folk, if now that they are gray
They should crack jokes, as fools would scout.

XLIV.

Now haply must they beg their bread,
(For want thereto doth them constrain ;)
Each day they wish that they were dead ;
Sorrow so troubles heart and brain,
That did not fear of God restrain,
Some frightful crime they might essay ;
And oft they take God's law in vain,
And with themselves do make away.

XLV.

For if in youth men spoke them fair,
Now do they nothing that is right ;
(Old apes, alas ! ne'er pleasing were,
No trick of theirs but brings despite.)
If they are dumb for fear of slight,
Folk them for worn-out dotards hold ;
Speak they, their silence folk invite,
Saying they pay with others' gold.

XLVI.

So with poor women that are old
And in nowise for love addrest :
When that young wenches they behold
Sought out by men and in request,
They ask God why before the rest
Theymselves were born ? They cry and shout :
God answers not ; for second-best
He'd come off at a scolding-bout.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE FAIR HELM-MAKER GROWN OLD.

I.

ME THOUGHT I heard the fair complain—
The fair that erst was helm-maker—
And wish herself a girl again.
After this fashion did I hear :
‘ Alack ! old age, felon and drear,
Why hast so early laid me low ?
What hinders but I slay me here,
And so at one stroke end my woe ?

II.

‘ Thou hast undone the mighty thrall
In which my beauty bound for me
Priests, merchants, soldiers, one and all :
For never man my face might see,
But would have given his all for fee,—
Without a thought of his abuse,—
To win my favours fair and free,
That churls for nothing now refuse.

III.

*'I did to many me deny,
(Therein I showed but little guile)
For love of one right false and sly,
Whom without stint I loved erewhile.
On whomsoever I might smile,
I loved him well, sorry or glad :
But he to me was harsh and vile,
And loved me but for what I had.*

IV.

*'Ill as he used me, and how'ev'r
Unkind, I loved him none the less :
Even had he made me fagots bear
And bind, one kiss or one caress,
And I forgot his wickedness.
The rogue ! 'twas ever thus the same
With him. It brought me scant liesse :
And what is left me ? Sin and shame.*

V.

*'Now is he dead this thirty year,
And I'm grown old and worn and gray :
When I recall the days that were,
And think of what I am to-day ;*

*And when me naked I survey,
And see my body shrunk to nought,
Withered and shrivelled,—well-a-way!
With grief I am well-nigh distraught.*

VI.

*'Where is that clear and crystal brow ?
Those eyebrows arched and golden hair ?
And those clear eyes, where are they now,
Wherewith the wisest ravished were ?
The little nose so straight and fair,
The tiny tender perfect ear,
The dimpled chin beyond compare,
The pouting lips so red and clear ?*

VII.

*'The shoulders strait and gent and small ;
Round arms and white hands delicate ;
The little pointed breasts withal ;
The haunches plump and high and straight,
Right fit for amorous debate ;
The wide firm hips ; the secret fair,
Betwixt broad white thighs situate,
Within its crisp'd plat of hair ?*

VIII.

*' Brows wrinkled up and tresses gray ;
 Eyebrows all gone, and dim the eyne
 That wont to charm men's hearts away ;
 The nose that was so straight and fine
 Now bent, alas ! from beauty's line ;
 Ears flaccid, furred, and hanging down ;
 Face faded sore, chin all incline,
 And lips mere bags of loose skin grown.*

IX.

*' Such is the end of human grace :
 The arms grown short and hands all drawn ;
 The shoulders bowed out of their place ;
 The breasts all shrivelled up and gone ;
 The haunches no less all withdrawn ;
 The thighs no longer like to thighs,
 Withered and mottled all like brawn ;
 And fie ! on that between them lies !*

X.

*' And so the litany goes round,
 Lamenting the good time gone by,
 Amongst us crouched upon the ground ;
 Poor silly hags, to-huddled by*

*A scanty fire of hempstalks dry,
Easy to light and soon gone out;
(We that once held our heads so high)
So all take turn and turn about.'*

THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAIR HELM- MAKER TO THE LIGHT O' LOVES.

I.

NOW think on't, Nell the glover rare,
That wont my scholar once to be,
And you, Blanche Slippermaker fair,
I'd have you see yourselves in me :
Look all to right and left take ye ;
Disdain no man ; for whores that bin
Old have nor course nor currency,
No more than money that's called in.

II.

And you, gent Sausage-huckstress, there,
That dance and trip it brisk and free,
And Guillemette Upholsterer,
Look you to Love beholden be :

*Soon must you shut up shop, perdie;
 Soon old you'll grow, faded and thin;
 Till but some old priest's turn serve ye,
 No more than money that's called in.*

III.

*Jenny the hatter, have a care
 Lest some false lover hamper thee;
 And Kitty Spurmaker, beware,
 Deny no man that proffers fee;
 For whores that are not fair to see
 Men's scorn and not their service win:
 In wrinkled eld no uses be,
 No more than money that's called in.*

ENVOI.

*Wenches, this is the cause, wot ye,
 That I do weep and make this din,—
 For that there is no help for me,
 No more than money that's called in.*

XLVII.

THIS lesson unto them gives she,
 The fair and frank of days gone by.
 Ill said or well, worth what they be,
 These things enregistered have I

By my clerk Fremin (giddy fry !),
Being as composed as well I may.

I curse him if he make me lie :
Like clerk, like master, people say.

XLVIII.

Thus the great danger may you see
Wherein a man in love may fall. . . .
Suppose that some lay blame on me
For this speech, saying, ‘Listen, all :
If it do make you love miscall
To hear of wantons named above,
Your doubts are too chimerical,
For these are women light o’ love.

XLIX.

‘ For if they love not but for gain, . . .
Men do but love them for a day ;
In sooth, they roundly love all men,
And when purse weeps, then are they gay.
One falls with time out of their way ;
But honest men, so God me spare,
With honest women will alway
Have dealing, and not otherwhere.’

L.

I put it that one thus devise :
He doth in no way me content ;
In sooth, I think no otherwise,—
And I agree incontinent
That one should love the excellent.
But this, at least, I want to know,—
Were these, whom all the world frequent,
Not honest women years ago ?

LI.

Ay, they *were* honest, verily ;
Without reproach or any blame :
For at the first, believe it me,
Some man or other thought no shame,
—Laic or clerk, to ease love's flame,
That burns worse than St. Anthony's fire,—
Ere she had loren her good name,
To take some maid for his desire.

LII.

Of these, as Love ordains, they made
Their lovers, and therein did well :
Each loved her lover in the shade,
And none else had with her to mell.

But this first love's not durable ;
For she, that loved but one erewhen,
Soon tires of him to her that fell,
And sets herself to love all men.

LIII.

What moves them thus ? I do opine,
Without their honour gainsaying,
That 'tis their nature feminine,
That tends to cherish everything :
There needs no other reasoning,
Unless this saw it be alone,
That everywhere folk say and sing :
Two workmen do more work than one.

LIV.

The shuttlecock light lovers be,
Their ladie-loves the battledore :
This is love's way in verity.
Spite clips and kisses, evermore
By constancy it sets small store.
For every one this wise complains
Of dogs and horses, love and war :
Each pleasure's bought by fifty pains.

DOUBLE BALLAD TO THE LIKE
PURPORT.

I.

SERVE love and ladies day and night,
Frequenting balls and revelries,
You'll get nor profit nor delight,
But only trouble, cuffs and sighs :
Light love makes asses of the wise,
As witness Solomon, God wot ;
And Samson thereby lost his eyes.
Happy is he who knows it not.

II.

Orpheus, the minstrel fair and wight,
That fluted in such dulcet guise,
Did hardly 'scape the deadly bite
Of Cerberus, in love's emprise ;
Narcissus also did so prize
His own fair favour, that (poor sot)
He drowned himself, as none denies.
Happy is he that knows it not.

III.

*Sardana also, the good knight,
That conquered Creté, did disguise
Him as a woman, that he might
Spin among maidens; and likewise
David, the king and prophet wise,
The fear of God for love forgot
At sight of white well-shapen thighs.
Happy is he that knows it not.*

IV.

*And David's son, that Ammon hight,
Deflowered his sister, for with lies,
Feigning desire for manchets white,
He did foul incest in God's eyes;
And Herod (history doth devise)
To John the Baptist's death was wrought
By a girl's dancing deviltries.
Happy is he that knows it not.*

V.

*And even I, poor woful wight,
Was beaten as linen is that lies
In washers' tubs for bats to smite;
And for what cause? How otherwise*

*Than Katherine of Vaucelles' eyes ?
And Noël, too, his good share got
Of cuffs at those festivities.
Happy is he that knows it not.*

VI.

*And yet before a young man might
Be brought this truth to recognise,
Well might you burn him bolt upright,
Witch-like that on a besom flies.
Above all, wenches doth he prize.
But there's no trusting them a jot :
Blonde or brunette, black or blue eyes,
Happy is he that knows them not.*

LV.

IF she whom I did serve of old
So whole of heart and loyally,
For whom I wasted years and gold,
And only won much misery,—
If she at first had told to me
(But no, alas !) her true intent,
I had essayed assuredly
To cast off my entanglement.

LVI.

Not so, but on the contrary :
Whatever I to her would say,
She listened evermore to me,
Nor ever said me yea or nay,—
And more, she suffered me to play
With her soft hair, her hand of white :
Thus did she humour me alway,
Intending only my despite.

LVII.

She fooled me, being in her power ;
For she did make me think, alas !
That one was other, cinders flour,
That a felt hat a mortar was,—
Of rusty iron, that 'twas glass ;
Of double ace, that it was trey :
So would she make a man an ass,
And lead him by the nose alway.

LVIII.

In this wise did she me persuade,
Till heaven a brazen canopy,
The clouds of calfskin to be made,
And morning evening seemed to be ;

Ill beer new wine, the gallows-tree
A spindle, turnips cabbage-plant,
A tower a windmill was for me,
And a fat priest a pursuivant.

LIX.

THUS Love hath wrought, me to deceive,
And bandied me from cold to hot :
There is no man, I do believe,
Were he as cunning as I'm not,
But he would leave with Love for scot
Pourpoint and hose, and fare like me,
That everywhere am called, God wot,
The lover shipwrecked on Love's sea.

LX.

Love now I scoff at and abjure,
And hate all women in my heat :
Death by their fault I do endure,
Nor do their hearts the quicklier beat.
I've put my lute beneath the seat;
Lovers no longer I'll ensue :
If ever I with them did treat,
I bid them now a long adieu.

LXI.

'Gainst Love my standard I've unfurled ;
 Let those that love him follow still ;
I'm his no longer in this world ;
 For I intend to do my will.
 Wherefore if any take it ill
That I Love venture to impeach,
 Let this content him, will or nill,
'A dying man is free of speech.'

.LXII.

I FEEL the drougths of death draw near ;
 My spittle is as white as snow ;
I am all worn and wasted sheer ;
 By token Jenny, to my woe,
 No more doth me as gallant owe,
But as a worn-out rook. Ah, well !
 I have the voice and air, I know ;
Yet am I but a cockerel.

LXIII.

Thanks be to God, and Jacques Thibault,
 Who made me drink of water cold
So much within a dungeon low,
 And also chew gags manifold.

When on these things I think of old,
I pray for him, et reliqua . . .
God give him . . . what at heart I hold
To be his due . . . et cætera.

LXIV.

Yet do I mean no harm to him,
Nor his lieutenant ; nor as well
Ill of his officer I deem,
Who's pleasant and agreeable.
Nought with the rest have I to mell,
Save Master Robert. . . . Short and tall,
As God loves Lombards, sooth to tell,
I love the whole lot, one and all !

LXV.

I DO remember (so God please)
In the year '56, I made,
Before I left, some legacies,
That some without my leave or aid
To call my Testament essayed.
(Their pleasure 'twas, and theirs alone.
But what? Is't not in common said
That each is master of his own?)

LXVI.

And should it happen that of these
Some peradventure be unpaid,
I order, after my decease,
That of my heirs demand be made.
Who are they? may perchance be said.
To Moreau, Provins and Turgis,
By letters sealed I have conveyed
Ev'n to the mattress under me.

LXVII.

Towards the Bastard de la Barre
Compassion still at heart I bear.
Beside his straw (and these words are
His old bequest, tho' more it were,
Not to revoke) I do declare
I give him my old mats for seat:
Well will they serve beneath his chair,
To keep him steady on his feet.

LXVIII.

In fine, but one more word I'll say
Before that I begin to test:
Before my clerk, who hears alway
(If he's awake), I do protest

That knowingly I have opprest
 No man in this my ordinance ;
 Nor will I make it manifest
 Except unto the realm of France.

LXIX.

I feel my heart that's growing dead ;
 Scarce speak another word can I.
 Fremin, sit down close to my bed,
 And look that no one us espy.
 Take pen, ink, paper, speedily,
 And what I say write thou therein ;
 Then have it copied by and by :
 And this is how I do begin.

Here beginneth Villon to test.

LXX.

In the eternal Father's name,
 And His that's present in the Host,
 One with the Father and the same,
 Together with the Holy Ghost,—
 [By whom was saved what Adam lost,
 And in the light of heaven arrayed,
 (Who most believes this merits most,)
 Dead sinners little gods were made :

LXXI.

Dead were they, body and soul as well,
Doomed to eternal punishment :
Flesh rotted, soul in flames of hell,
What way soe'er their lives were spent.
But I except, in my intent,
Prophets and Patriarchs great and small ;
Meseems God never could have meant
Them for much roasting, if at all.

LXXII.

If any ask, ‘ What maketh thee
With questions such as this to mell,
That art not in theology
Doctor, or therein capable ?’
'Tis Jesus His own parable,
Touching the rich man that did lie
Buried in burning flames of hell,
And saw the leper in the sky.

LXXIII.

If he had seen the lazarus burn,
He had not asked him, well I wot,
To give him water, or in turn
To cool his dry and parchèd throat.

There folk will have a scury lot
 That to buy drink their hosen sell :
 Since drink is there so hardly got,
 God save us all from thirst in hell.]

LXXIV.

Now in God's name the aforesaid,
 And in our Lady's name no less,
 Let without sin this say be said
 By me grown haggard for duresse.
 If I nor light nor fire possess,
 God hath ordained it for my sin ;
 But as to this and other stress
 I will leave talking and begin.

LXXV.

First, my poor soul (which God befriend)
 Unto the glorious Trinity
 And to our Lady I commend,
 The fountain of Divinity,
 Desiring all the charity
 Of the nine orders of the sky,
 That it of them transported be
 Unto the throne of God most high.

LXXVI.

Item, my body I ordain
Unto the earth, our grandmother :
Thereof the worms will have small gain ;
Hunger hath worn it many a year.
Let it be given quick to her ;
From earth it came, to earth apace
Returns ; all things, unless I err,
Do gladly turn to their own place.

LXXVII.

Item, to Guillaume de Villon,—
(My more than father, who indeed
To me more love and care hath done
Than mothers to the babes they feed ;
Who me from many a scrape hath freed,
And now of me hath small liesse,—
I do entreat him, bended-kneed,
He seek not now to share my stress,—)

LXXVIII.

I do bequeath my library,—
The novel of the Devil's share,
By Messire Guy de Tabarie,—
A right trustworthy man,—writ fair.

Beneath a bench it lies somewhere,
In quires. Tho' crudely it be writ,
The matter's so beyond compare
That it redeems the style of it.

LXXIX.

I give the ballad following
To my good mother, —who of me
(God knows !) hath had much suffering,—
That she may worship our Ladie :
No other refuge can I see
To which, when stricken down by dole,
I may for help and comfort flee;—
Nor yet my mother, poor good soul !

BALLAD THAT VILLON MADE AT
THE REQUEST OF HIS MOTHER,
WHEREWITHAL TO DO HER HOM-
AGE TO OUR LADY.

I.

*L*ADY of Heaven, Regent of the earth,
Empress of all the marish-pools of Hell,
Receive me, Thy poor Christian, nothing worth,
In the fair midst of Thine elect to dwell:
Albeit my lack of grace I know full well;
For that Thy grace, my Lady and my Queen,
Aboundeth more than all my sins, I ween,
Withouten which no soul of all that sigh
May merit Heaven. So God may make me clean,
In this belief I will to live and die.

II.

*Say to Thy Son I am His,—that by His birth
And death my sins may be redeemable,—
As Mary of Egypt's dole was changed to mirth,
And eke Theophilus', of whom men tell
He was of Thee absolved, albeit to Hell
The poor clerk's soul had long contracted been.*

*Assoilzie me, that I may have no teen,
Maid, that without breach of virginity
Didst bear our Lord that in the Host is seen.
In this belief I will to live and die.*

III.

*A poor old wife I am, and little worth :
Nothing I know ; ne'er could I write or spell :
In cloister, in the parish of my birth,
I see Heaven limned, with harps and lutes a-swell,
And miscreants seething in a painted Hell.
One doth me fear, the other joy serene :
Grant I may have the joy, O dear my Queen,
To whom all sinners lift their hands on high,
Made whole in faith withouten let or teen.
In this belief I will to live and die.*

ENVOI.

*Thou didst conceive, O sweet and dear my Queen,
Jesus the Lord, that hath nor end nor mean,
Almighty, that did put off Heaven's sheen
To succour us, put on our frailty,
Offering to death His sweet of youth and green :
Such as He is, our Lord He is, I woen !
In this belief I will to live and die.*

LXXX.

Item, upon my dearest Rose
Nor heart nor liver I bestow :
Thereat she would turn up her nose,
Albeit she hath coin eno',—
A great silk purse, as well I know,
Stuffed full of crowns, both new and old.
May he be hanged, or high or low,
That leaves her silver aught or gold.

LXXXI.

For she without it has enow :
To me it matters not a jot :
My wild-oat days are past, I trow ;
No more desire in me is hot :
All that I leave unto Michot,
That was surnamed the good gallant—
Or rather to his heirs ; God wot,
At St. Satur his tomb's extant.

LXXXII.

This notwithstanding, to acquit
Me towards Love rather than her,
(For never had I any whit
Of hope from her : I cannot hear,

Nor do I care, if a deaf ear
 To all as well as me turns she ;
 But by Saint Magdalen I aver,
 Therein but food for mirth I see.)

LXXXIII.

This ballad shall she have of me,
 That all by rhymes in R doth close :
 Who shall be bearer ? Let me see :
 Pernet the Bastard I have chose,
 Provided that, if as he goes,
 He come across my pug-nosed frow,
 This question he to her propose,
 'Foul wanton, wherefrom comest thou ?'

BALLAD OF VILLON TO HIS
 MISTRESS.

I.

FALSE beauty, that hast cost me many a sigh ;
 Fair-seeming sweetness in effect how sour ;
 Love-liking, harder far than steel, that I
 May well name mistress of my misery dour ;

*Traitorous charms, that did my heart devour ;
Pride, that puts folk to death with secret scorn ;
Pitiless eyes, will ye not once allow her
To put off pride, and succour one forlorn ?*

II.

*Well were it for me elsewhere to apply
For succour : well I know that in her bower
The load of love I never shall lay by ;
Sure I would fly, were it but in my power.
Haro ! I cry—both great and small implore !
But what avails me ? I shall die, outworn,
Without blow struck, unless my lady bow her
To put off pride, and succour one forlorn.*

III.

*A time will come to wither and make dry,
Yellow and pale, thy beauty's full-blown flower :
Then should I laugh, if any youth had I.
But no, alas ! I then shall have no power
To laugh, being old in that disastrous hour.
Wherefore drink deep, before the river's frorne ;
Neither refuse, whilst grace is still thy dower,
To put off pride, and succour one forlorn.*

ENVOL.

*Great God of Love, all lovers' governour,
Ill falleth thy displeasure to be borne :
True hearts are bound, by Christ our Saviour,
To put off pride, and succour one forlorn.*

LXXXIV.

Item, to Master Ythier,
To whom I left my sword of yore,
I give (to set to song) this lay,
Containing verses half a score ;
Being a De profundis for
His love of once upon a day :
Her name I must not tell you, or
He'd hate me like the deuce alway.

LAY, OR RATHER RONDEAU.

DEATH, of thy rigour I complain,
That hast my lady torn from me,
And yet wilt not contented be,
Till from me too all strength be ta'en,
For languishment of heart and brain.
What harm did she in life to thee,
Death ?

*One heart we had betwixt us twain;
Which being dead, I too must dree
Death, or, like carven saints we see
In choir, sans life to live be fain,
Death!*

LXXXV.

Item, to Master Jehan Cornu
I wish to make a fresh bequest :
Many a good turn he did me do,
What time I was of fate opprest :
Wherfore the garden I do vest
In him that Peter Bourguignon
Sold me, so that he have redrest
The door and fix the gable on.

LXXXVI.

I there did lose, for lack of door,
A hone and handle of a hoe :
Thenceforward, falcons half a score
Had^{en}not there caught a lark, I trow.
The hostel's safe : but keep it so.
I put a hook there in sign-stead :
God grant the robber nought but woe,
A bloody night and earthen bed !

LXXXVII.

Item, considering that the wife
 Of Master Peter St. Amant
 (Yet if therein be blame or strife,
 God grant her grace and benison)
 Me as a beggar looks upon,
 For the White Horse that will not stir,
 A Mare, and for the Mule, anon,
 A Brick-red Ass I give to her.

LXXXVIII.

Item, I give unto Denis
 (Elect of Paris) Hesselin,
 Of wine of Aulnis, from Turgis
 Stolen at my peril, casks fourteen.
 If he to drink too much begin,
 That so his wit and sense decline,
 Let them pour water therewithin :
 Many a good house is lost by wine.

LXXXIX.

Item, upon my advocate,
 Whose name is Guillaume Charriau,—
 Though he's turned trader, too, of late,—
 My sword, (without the scabbard, though,)

And a gold royal I bestow
In sous, to fill his purse's space;
Levied on those that come and go
Within the Temple market-place.

xc.

Item, my proctor Fournier
Shall have of me,—for all his pain
And travail for me night and day,—
Four times five sols. Once and again,
Full many a cause he did me gain,—
Just ones, by Jesus be it said !
Even as the judgment did ordain :
The best of rights has need of aid.

xci.

Item, to Master Raguyer
The great Stone Jug in Grève give I,
Upon condition that, each day,
Before the sun in heaven be high,
(Even though what covers calf and thigh
To make the money up sell he,)
Five farthings' worth of wine he buy
At the Pineapple Hostelry.

xcii.

Item, for Mairebeuf (I vow)
 And Nicholas de Louviers,
 I give them neither ox nor cow,
 For drovers neither herds are they,
 But folk that ride a-hawking may
 (Think not I'm making mock of you)
 Partridge and plover every day
 To catch, upon the plain Marchecroue.

xciii.

Item, if Turgis come to me,
 I'll pay him fairly for his wine :
 But soft ; if my address find he,
 He'll have more wit than any nine.
 I leave to him that vote of mine,
 As citizen of Paris see :
 If sometimes I speak Poitevine,
 Two Poitou ladies taught it me.

xciv.

Damsels they were, both fair and free,
 Residing at St. Generoux,
 Hard by St. Julian of Brittany,
 Or in the Marches of Poitou.

The name above is not the true;
The reason needs not to be shown:

I am not fool enough, look you,
To let my loves of all be known.

xcv.

Item, Jehan Raguyer I give
(That's Sergeant of the Twelve, indeed)
Each day, as long as he shall live,
A ramakin, that he may feed
Thereon, and stay his stomach's need
(At Bailly's shop it shall be bought).
Let him not ask for wine or mead,
But at the fountain quench his drought.

xcvi.

Item, I give the Prince of Fools
A master-fool, Michault du Four,
The jolliest jester in the Schools,
That sings so well 'Ma douce amour.'
With that of him I'll speak no more.
Brief, if he's but in vein some jot,
He's a right royal fool, be sure:
He's either witty, or he's not.

xcvii.

Item, I give unto a pair
 Of Sergeants (here whose names I've set)—
 For that they're honest folk and fair—
 Denis Richer and Jehan Vallette,
 A nightcap each of cotton net,
 Upon their hats of felt to sew—
 I mean, *foot*-sergeants, for as yet
 Nought of the horsemen do I know.

xcviii.

Item, I give to Perrinet,
 (I mean the Bastard de la Barre,)
 For that he is both fair and gay,
 For arms, in lieu of bend or bar,
 A pair of dice that loaded are,
 Or a marked pack of cards: but 'ware!
 If he be caught out, near or far,
 He'll suffer for it, then and there.

xcix.

Item, I order that Chollet
 No longer hoop or saw or plane
 Or head up barrels all the day.
 Let him his tools change for a cane

(Or Lyons sword), so he retain
(Above all things) the fighting booth:
Though noise and strife to hate he feign,
He loves them in his heart, forsooth.

C.

Item, I give to Jehan le Loup—
Seeing that thin and weak is he
(Though honest man and comrade true),
And that Chollet less skilfully
Hunts in the streets than on the lea,
(There not a chick he'll miss, I ween,)—
The tabard, as a legacy,
To cover both, lest they be seen.

C1.

Item, to Duboys, goldworker,
One hundred cloves, both head and tail,
Of Saracenic zinziber ;
Not cases therewithal to nail,
But women's limbs to draw to male
And bring in contact thigh and thigh,
That so the teats with milk may swell,
And testicles with sperm thereby.

CII.

To Captain Riou, as a treat
For him and for his archers too,
I give six pounds of wolvis-meat,
(A kind that is to fleshers new,)
Coursed with great dogs, and set to stew
In tavern wine. In sooth, to feed
Upon these dainties fine and few,
One might do many an evil deed.

CIII.

'Tis meat a trifle heavier
Than either feathers, cork or down :
For folk in tents 'tis famous fare,
In field or leaguer of a town.
But if the dogs, with hunting blown,
By chance should in a trap be caught,
I, to whom tanning is well known,
Direct their skins for cloaks be wrought.

CIV.

Item, to Robin Troussecaille
(Who's thriven rarely in his trade ;
He scorns to go afoot like quail,
But sits a fat roan stoutly made)

My platter, that he is afraid
To borrow, I on him bestow ;
So will he now be all arrayed :
He needed nothing else, I know.

CV.

To Perrot Girard I will well
(That's barber sworn at Bourg la Reine)
Two basins and a fish-kettle,
That he has well deserved to gain.
Six years ago, the man was fain
For seven whole days (God have his soul !)
Upon fat pork me to maintain.
Witness the Abbess of Shaven-poll !

CVI.

Item, unto the Begging Frères,
The Devotees and the Beguines,
At Paris, Orleans and elsewhere,
Both Turpelins and Turpelinnes,—
Of stout meat soups with eggs beseen
I make oblation. Then (the Turks !)
Let them a pair of sheets between
Contemplate God in His best works.

CVII.

NO monk am I that give them this ;
 But all from mother earth do spring :
 Besides, God owes them some small bliss,
 Seeing they bear much suffering.
 Each one of them must live, poor thing,—
 E'en monks of Paris,—sooth to tell,
 If to our wives they pleasure bring,
 They love the husbands too as well.

CVIII.

Whatever Master Jehan Pontlieu
 Missaid of them, et reliqua,
 Constrained in public place thereto,
 His words with shame he did unsay :
 Meung gloses in his usual way
 At their expense, and Mathieu too.
 But what God's Church respects alway
 One should do honour thereunto.

CIX.

So I submit me, for my part,
 In all that I can do or say,
 To honour them with all my heart,
 And yield them service, as I may.

Fools only will of them missay :
For or in pulpit or elsewhere
None needeth to be told if they
Are wont their enemies to spare.

cx.

Item, I give to Brother Baude,
That in the Convent des Chartreux
Good cheer doth make, and his abode,
A morion and gisarms two,
Lest anything Decosta do
To steal from him his wench away.
He's old : unless he quit the stew,
There'll be the devil soon to pay.

cxi.

Item, for that the Chancellor
Hath chewed fly-droppings off and on
Full long, let him a few times more
(The rogue !) his own seal spit upon ;
And let him sprain his thumb anon,
(Him of the diocese, I mean,)
To put my wishes all in one :
God save the others all from teen.

CXII.

I give my Lords the Auditors
Arras to make their chamber fair ;
And each whose buttocks in the wars
Have been, a hollow-bottomed chair,
Provided that they do not spare
Macée of Orleans, who (God wot)
Had my virginity whilere,
For she's a thoroughly bad lot.

CXIII.

To Master Francis (if he live),
Promoter of the Paris see,
A Scotchman's collaret I give,
Of hemp without orfèvrerie :
For when he put on chivalry,
God and St. George he did blaspheme,
And ne'er hears speak of them but he
Doth with mad laughter shout and scream.

CXIV.

Item, Jehan Laurens, whose poor eyes
Always so red and weak have been,
(Not by his own fault, anywise,
But through his parents' sin, I ween,

Who drank withouten stint or mean,)
 I give my hose to wipe them clear :
 Had he of Bourges archbishop been,
 He had had sendal; but that's dear.

cxv.

Item, for Master Jehan Cotard,—
 My proctor in the Bishop's court
 (To whom some fees still owing are,
 That had till now escaped my thought)
 When action 'gainst me Denise brought,
 Saying I had miscallèd her,—
 I have this Orison out-wrought,
 That God to heaven his soul prefer.

BALLAD AND ORISON.

I.

NOAH, that first the vine plantèd;
 Lot, too, that in the grot drank high,
 By token that Love, as I have read,
 Incited your daughters with you to lie

*(Not that I blame you myself thereby);
Architriclinus, learned in the bowl,—
I pray you all three to set in the sky
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.*

II.

*He was of your lineage born and bred;
He drank of the best and dearest aye;
Though he had never a hat to his head,
The best of all topers he was, say I.
Never good liquor found him shy;
None could the pot from his grasp cajole.
Fair Lords, do not suffer in hell to sigh
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.*

III.

*I've seen him oft, when he went to bed,
Totter as one that was like to die;
And once he gat him a bump on the head
Gainst a butcher's stall, as he staggered by.
Brief, one might journey far and nigh
For a better fellow to toss off a bowl.
Let him in, if you hear him the wicket try:
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.*

ENVOL.

*He scarce could spit, he was always so dry ;
And ever ' My throat's like a red-hot coal !'
Parched up with thirst, he was wont to cry :
Good Master Cotard, honest soul.*

CXVI.

Item, I order that young Mesle
In future manage my bureau
De change, but that he do not fail
To give full change to high and low,
According as the values go :
Three crowns six half-crowns, and two small
Angels one great one ; for, you know,
Lovers should aye be liberal.

CXVII.

Item, I've seen with my own eyes
That my poor orphans, all the three,
Are grown in age, and wit likewise.
No sheepsheads are they, I can see ;
From here to Salins none there be
That better bear them at the school :
Now, by the Confraternity,
A boy like that can be no fool.

CXVIII.

I will that they to college go :
Whither ? To Peter de Richer.
Donatus is too hard, I trow :
I do not wish them there to stay.
I'd rather they should learn to say
An Ave Mary, and there stand,
Without more letters. Now-a-day
Clerks seldom get the upper hand.

CXIX.

Let them learn this, and there leave off ;
I do forbid them to proceed :
Meseems it is too hard and tough
For boys to understand the Creed.
I halve my long gray tabard wede,
And give one half thereof to sell
And buy them custards : for indeed
Children did ever love cates well.

CXX.

I will that they well grounded be
In manners, though it cost me dear :
Clerks' hoods shall they wear, all the three,
And go with thumbs in girdle-gear,

Humble to all that come them near,
Saying, 'Eh, what? . . . Don't mention it!'
So folk shall say, when they appear,
'These boys are gently bred, I wit.'

CXXI.

Item, as to my clerklings lean,—
To whom my titles and degree
(Seeing them fair and well beseen
And straight as reeds) I gave in fee ;
And also, without price and free,
I did my rent and charge assign
To levy on the pillory,
As safe and sure as if 'twere mine :

CXXII.

(Though they be young and of good cheer,
In that they nothing me displease :
Come twenty, thirty, forty year,
They will be different, if God please.
Ill doth he that maltreateth these,
For fair they are and in their prime :
Fools only will them beat and tease ;
For they will grow up men in time.)—

CXXIII.

The purses of the Clerks Eighteen
They'll have, although my back I break :
They're not like dormice, that grow lean
With three months' sleep before they wake.
Ill fares he that his sleep doth take
In youth, when watch and work should he,
So that he needs must keep awake
In age, when he should sleeping be.

CXXIV.

Thereof unto the Almoner
Letters to this effect I write :
If they to pray for me demur,
Let pull their ears for such despite.
Folk often wonder all their might
Why by these twain such store set I ;
But fast or feast days, honour bright,
I never came their mothers nigh.

CXXV.

To Michault Culdou I bespeak,
Also unto Charlot Taranne,
One hundred sols. Let neither seek
Whence ; 'twill be manna to each man :

Also my boots of leather tan,
Both soles and uppers, sundry pair ;
So that they lie not with my Jeanne
Nor any other whore like her.

CXXVI.

Unto the Baron de Grigny,
To whom I left Bicêtre of yore,
I give the Castle of Billy ;
Provided window, gate and door
He 'stablish as they were before ;
That so in good repair it be.
Let him make money more and more ;
Money I need, and none has he.

CXXVII.

To Thibault de la Garde, no less, . . .
(Thibault ? I lie : his name is John.)
What can I spare, without distress ?
I've lost enough the year bygone :
God give him riches ; . . . and so on ! . . .
What if I left him the canteen ?
No : Genevoys 's the older one,
And has more nose to dip therein.

CXXVIII.

Item, I give to Basanier,
The judge's clerk and notary,
A frail of cloves, conveyed away
From John of Ruel's shop by me :
Mautainct and Rosnel the like fee
Shall have, which them I trust will stir
To serve with service brisk and free
The Lord who serves Saint Christopher;

CXXIX.

On whom the Ballad following
For his fair lady I bestow : . . .
If love to us no such prize fling,
I'm not surprised ; for, whiles ago,
He bore her off from high and low,
At that tourney King René made :
Hector or Troilus ne'er, I trow,
So much performed, so little said.

BALLAD THAT VILLON GAVE TO A
NEWLY-MARRIED GENTLEMAN TO
SEND TO HIS LADY, BY HIM CON-
QUERED AT THE SWORD'S POINT.

I.

*THE falcon clasps his wings at break of day,
Not out of dule, but for sheer lustihead ;
Salutes the morn, and out of joy doth play,
Stoops to the lure, and dresses him to feed :
So now to youward doth desire me lead
Of that all lovers long for joyously ;
Know that Love hath so ordered in his rede :
This is the cause that we together be.*

II.

*Queen of my heart, unrivalled and alway,
Till death consume me, thou shalt be indeed.
Fair laurels, in my right, join in affray
With sweet wild rose, to purge all bitter weed.
Reason ordains that I should ne'er be freed
(And therewithal my pleasure doth agree),
From thy sweet service, while the years succeed :
This is the cause that we together be.*

III.

*And what is more, when dule doth me assay,
 Through Fate, that oftentimes maketh hearts to bleed,
 Thy dulcet looks shall chase ill luck away,
 As wind disperses smoke of evil weed.
 In no wise, sweetest, do I lose the seed
 Sown in thy field; for the fruit liketh me.
 God hath so ordered it in very deed :
 This is the cause that we together be.*

ENVOL.

*Princess, I pray to my discourse give heed,
 My heart shall not dissever aye from thee ;
 Nor thine from me, if it aright I read :
 This is the cause that we together be.*

CXXX.

Item, I give Jehan Perdryer nought ;
 And to his brother Frank the same ;
 Although to help me they have wrought,
 And to their goods to give me claim :
 (Tongues have they, sharp and fierce as flame :)
 And too, my gossip Frank, of yore,
 Without command or prayer, my name
 At Bourges commended passing sore.

CXXXI.

Let them in Taillevent go see
The chapters that of frying treat,
If they can find my recipe
For dressing up this kind of meat :
'Twas Saint Macaire, I once did meet,
Cooking a devil, skin and all,
That so the roast should smell more sweet,
Gave me this Recipe, that I call

BALLAD OF SLANDEROUS TONGUES.

I.

*I*n realgar, in arsenic green and white,
And boiling lead, for fitter fricassee,
Saltpetre, orpiment, quicklime unite
With soot and pitch ; and tempered well with ley
Made of a Jewess' urine let it be ;
In water that has lazars' limbs made clean,
Wherein old boots and hosen steeped have been ;
In aspics' blood, in deadly drugs and tried,
In badgers', wolves' and foxes' gall and spleen,—
Let all these sharp and poisonous tongues be fried.

II.

*In brain of cat, that water doth affright,
Black and so old that not a tooth hath he;
In foam and slaver from a mad dog's bite,
So old and rotten he can hardly see;
In froth of broken-winded mule, that ye
May cut up small with knives; in water green
With festering slime, wherein there may be seen
Serpents and rats that there have lived and died,
Lizards, toads, frogs and such like beasts obscene,—
Let all these sharp and poisonous tongues be fried.*

III.

*In sublimes, unsafe to touch and sight,
That in a live snake's navel mingled be;
In yellow pus, exuding day and night
From fistula or ulcer on the knee;
And in those vessels, foul to smell and see,
Where nurses children's dirty clouts make clean;
In blood that barbers dry in the sun's sheen;
In tubs where whores themselves have purified
(No apple-squire but knows the thing I mean),—
Let all these sharp and poisonous tongues be fried.*

Envoi.

*Prince, all these dainties look you strain and screen
(If neither sieve nor bag you have) between
Old and foul hosen, with the feet uptied:
But first, in excrement of swine unclean,
Let all these sharp and poisonous tongues be fried.*

CXXXII.

To Andry Courault, next, give I
The Counterblast to Franc-Gontier ;
As to the Tyrant, placed on high,
I've nothing thereanent to say :
Wisdom forbids that in affray
With mighty men poor folk should strive,
Lest they spread nets across the way,
To catch the vauntards in alive.

CXXXIII.

I fear not Gontier, that no men
Has, nor is better off than I :
But now strife is betwixt us twain ;
For he exalteth poverty :

Good luck he deemeth it, perdie,
 Winter and summer to be poor.
 Myself, I hold it misery.
 Who's wrong? Be you judge, I conjure.

BALLAD ENTITLED THE COUNTER-
 BLAST TO FRANC-GONTIER.

I.

A THWART a hole in the arras, t'other day,
I saw a fat priest lie on a down bed,
Hard by a fire; and by his side there lay
Dame Sydonie, full comely, white and red.
By night and day a goodly life they led;
I watched them laugh and kiss and play, drink high
Of spicèd hypocras; then putting by
Their clothes, I saw them each the other seize
And take their fill of pleasure. Thence knew I
 There is no treasure but to have one's ease.

II.

If, with his mistress Helen, Franc-Gontier
Had all their life this goodly fashion led,
With cloves of garlic, rank of smell alway,
They had no need to rub their eaten bread :

*For all their curds (sans malice be it said)
And all their milk, no jot I care, not I.
If they delight beneath the rose to lie,
What say you? Must we couch afield like these?
Like you not better bed and chair hard by?
There is no treasure but to have one's ease.*

III.

*They eat coarse bread of barley every day,
And drink but water from the heavens shed:
Not all the birds that singen all the way
From here to Babylon could me persuade
To spend one day so harboured and so fed.
For God's sake let Franc-Gontier none deny
To play with Helen 'neath the open sky!
Why should I take it ill, if so they please?
But whatsoever store they set thereby,
There is no treasure but to have one's ease.*

Envoy.

*Prince, be you judge between us, once for aye:
For my poor part (so that it none displease)
Whilst young, I heard folk say it far and nigh,
There is no treasure but to have one's ease.*

CXXXIV.

Item, the Ballad here below
 On Mademoiselle de Bruyères,
 And on her damsels, I bestow,
 Therefrom the Gospel to declare,
 And bring again the wandering fair
 That in the meadows ply their trade :
 Not in the churchyards, but elsewhere
 Let preachment unto them be made.

BALLAD OF THE WOMEN OF PARIS.

I.

THOUGH folk deem women young and old
Of Venice and Genoa well eno'
Favoured with speech, both glib and bold,
On lovers' messages for to go,
I, at my peril, I say no.
Though Lombards and Romans patter well ;
Savoyards, Florentines, less or mo,—
 The women of Paris bear the bell.

II.

The Naples women (so we are told)
Are pleasant enough of speech, and so

*Are Prussians and Austrians. Some folk hold
Greeks and Egyptians sweet of show :
But whether they hail from high or low,
Castille or Hungary, heaven or hell,
For dulcet speech, over any I know,
The women of Paris bear the bell.*

III.

*Switzers nor Bretons know how to scold,
Nor Gascony women : well I trow,
Two fishfags in Paris the bridge that hold
Would slang them dumb in a minute or so.
Picardy, England, Calais, St. Lô,
(Is that enough places for one spell?)
Valenciennes, wherever you go,
The women of Paris bear the bell.*

Envoy.

*Prince, after all the prize must go
To the ladies of Paris for speaking well :
If Italians be sweet of speech or no,
The women of Paris bear the bell.*

CXXXV.

Look at them there, by twos and threes,
Upon their gowns' hem seated low,
In churches and in nunneries :
 Speak not, but softly near them go ;
 And speedily you'll come to know
Such judgments as Macrobius ne'er
 Did give. Whate'er you catch, I trow,
'Twill all some flower of wisdom bear.

CXXXVI.

Item, unto Montmartre hill
(Old past the memory of man)
Let them adjoin (it is my will)
 The mound called Mount Valerian :
 I give it for a quarter's span
The indulgences from Rome I brought,
 Whence many a good Parisian
Will seek the church, till now unsought.

CXXXVII.

Item, to serving men and maids
 Of good hostels (in no despite),
Pheasants, tarts, custards and croustades,
 And high carousal at midnight :

Seven pints or eight, the matter's slight,
Whilst sound asleep are lord and dame.

Thereafter, putting out the light,
Commend them to the asses' game.

CXXXVIII.

Item, to honest wenches who
Have fathers, mothers, aunts. . . . 'Fore God !
I've nothing left to give to you,
All on the servants I've bestowed.
'Tis pity too ; for they had showed
Themselves with little satisfied,—
Poor liberal girls that from the road
Do ofttimes in the convents hide.

CXXXIX.

Cistercians and Celestines,
Though they are railed off from the rest,
They eat rich meats and drink sweet wines,
Whereof poor whores know not the zest :
As Jeanne and Perrette can attest,
And Isabel, that swears ' My fay !'
Since they in life are so opprest,
Surely they'll scarce be damned alway.

Item, to sturdy stout Margot,
 Right fair of favour and wit-whole,
 A pious creature, too, eno',—
 I swear to her, upon the bowl,
 I love her as my proper soul ;
 As she (sweet chuck) loves me indeed :
 If any would with her condole,
 Let him this Ballad to her read.

BALLAD OF VILLON AND LA
 GROSSE MARGOT.

I.

BECAUSE I love and serve a whore sans glose,
 Think not therefore or knave or fool am I :
 She hath in her such goods as no man knows.
 For love of her, I gird me sword on thigh :
 When clients come, I take the pot hard by,
 And get me to the wine, without word said.
 I bring them water, fruit and cheese and bread.
 If they pay well, I bid them, ' Well, God aid !
 Come here again, when lust stands you in stead,
 In this the brothel where we drive our trade.'

II.

*But surely before long an ill wind blows,
When, coinless, Margot comes by me to lie :
I hate the sight of her, catch up her hose,
Her gown, her surcoat and her silken tie,
Swearing to pawn them meat and drink to buy.
She grips me by the throat and cuffs my head,
Cries 'Antichrist !' and swears by Jesus dead
It shall not be : then I catch up a blade,
And write a rescript on her nose in red,
In this the brothel where we drive our trade.*

III.

*Then, peace being made, to show we're no more foes,
She lets wind at me in my very eye,
And laughing, shakes her fist before my nose,
Bids me 'good cheer' and claps me on the thigh.
Then drunk, like logs we slumber, she and I.
And waking, when her womb is hungerèd,
To save the child beneath her girdlestead,
She mounts on me, flat as a pancake laid.
With wantoning she drains me well nigh dead,
In this the brothel where we drive our trade.*

ENVOL.

*Come what will, ready baked I hold my bread :
Well worth a lecher with a wanton wed !
Ill cat to ill rat, each for each was made :
We fly from honour, it from us hath fled :
Lewdness we love, that stands us well in stead,
In this the brothel where we drive our trade.*

CXLI.

Item, to Marion (Statue hight)
And to tall Joan of Brittany,
I give to keep a school by night,
Where masters taught of scholars be :
A thing you everywhere may see,
Except in Mehun gaol alone.
Wherefore I say, Out on the fee !
Since that the trick is so well known.

CXLII.

Item, to Noel, handsome wight,
No other gift I do ordain
Than two handfuls of osiers white,
Out of my garden freshly ta'en :

(One should to chastisement be fain ;
In sooth it is fair almsgiving:)
Eleven score strokes laid on amain,
Of Master Hal's administ'ring.

CXLIII.

Item, the Hospitals unto
What to bequeath I hardly know :
Here jests are neither right nor due ;
For sick poor folk have ills enow :
Each table's leavings to them go.
The mendicants have had my goose :
In fact, they'll have the bones also.
To the poor folk a few stray sous.

CXLIV.

I give my barber, (an he list)—
By name that Colin Galerne hight,
Near Angelot's the Herbalist,—
A lump of ice : let him apply't
Upon his paunch and hold it tight,
So he may freeze as seems him meet :
If thus one winter pass the wight,
He'll not complain of summer heat.

CXLV.

Item, I leave the Foundlings nought :
 But to the Lostlings comfort's due,
 Who should, if anywhere, be sought
 Where lodges Marion the Statue.
 A lesson of my sort to you
 I'll read : 'twill soon be overpast.
 Turn not, I pray, deaf ears thereto,
 But listen sadly : 'tis the last.

SEEMLY LESSON OF VILLON TO THE
 GOOD-FOR-NOUGHTS.

I.

FAIR sons, you're wasting, ere you're old,
 The fairest rose to you that fell.
 You, that like birdlime grasp and hold,
 When to Montpappeau or Ruel
 (Fair clerks) you wander, keep you well :
 For of the tricks that there he played,
 Thinking to 'scape a second spell,
 Colin of Cayeulx lost his head.

II.

*No trifling game is this to play,
Where one stakes soul and body too :
If losers, no remorse can stay
A shameful death from ending you ;
And even the winner, for his due,
Hath not a Dido to his wife.
Foolish and lewd I hold him who
Doth for so little risk his life.*

III.

*Now all of you to me attend :
Even a load of wine, folk say,
With drinking at last comes to an end,
By fire in winter, in woods in May.
If you have money, it doth not stay,
But this way and that it wastes amain :
What does it profit you, any way ?
Ill-gotten good is nobody's gain.*

BALLAD OF GOOD DOCTRINE TO
THOSE OF ILL LIFE.

I.

SMUGGLE *indulgences, as you may :*
Cog the dice for your cheating throws :
Try if counterfeit coin will pay,
At the risk of losing your ears and nose :
Deal but in treason, lie and glose,
Rob and ravish : what profits it ?
Where do you think the money goes ?
Taverns and wenches, every whit.

II.

Flute and juggling and cymbals play :
Follow the mountebanks and their shows :
Along with the strolling players stray,
That wander whither God only knows :
Act mysteries, farces, imbroglios :
Gain money by cards or a lucky hit
At the pins : however it's got, it goes :
Taverns and wenches, every whit.

III.

*Turn from your evil courses, I pray,
That smell so foul in a decent nose :
Earn your bread in some honest way.
If you have no letters, nor verse nor prose,
Plough or groom horses for food and clothes.
Enough shall you have if you stick to it :
But throw not your wage to each wind that blows :
Taverns and wenches, every whit.*

ENVOI.

*Doublets, pourpoints and silken hose,
Gowns and linen, woven or knit,
Ere your wede's worn, away it goes :
Taverns and wenches, every whit.*

CXLVI.

Companions in debauchery,
Ill souls and bodies well bestèd,
Beware of that ill sun (look ye)
That tans a man when he is dead :
'Tis a foul death to die, I dread.
Keep yourselves from it, so you may ;
And let this thought stand you in stead :
You must die, all of you, some day.

CXLVII.

Item, I give the Fifteen-score . . .
 (Three hundred just as well 'tmight be)—
 For I do set by them great store,
 (Paris, not Provins ones, perdie)—
 My glasses they shall have from me,
 That in the churchyards where they serve
 They may the bad to sever see
 From honest folk that well deserve.

CXLVIII.

HERE* silence doth for ever reign :
 Nothing it profiteth the dead
 On beds of satin to have lain,
 And drunk from gold the vine-juice red,
 And lived in glee and lustihead.
 Soon all such joys must be resigned :
 All pass away, and in their stead
 Only the sin remains behind.

CXLIX.

When I consider all the heads
 That in these charnels gathered be,
 Those that are sleeping in these beds

* *i.e.* in the churchyards.

May have (for aught that I can see)
Been mighty lords of high degree,
Bishops and dames,—or else poor churls :
There is no difference to me
'Twixt watercarriers' bones and earls'.

CL.

These ladies all, that in their day
Each unto each did bend and bow,
Wherefore did some the sceptre sway,
Of others feared and courted,—now
Here are they sleeping all a-row,
Heaped up together any-dele,
Their crowns and honours all laid low.
Masters or clerks, there's no appeal.

CL.I.

Now are they dead, God have their sprights !
As to their bodies, they are clay :
Once were they ladies, lords and knights,
That on soft beds of satin lay
And fed on dainties every day.
Their bones are mouldered into dust,
They care not now to laugh or play :
Christ will assoilzie them, I trust.

CLII.

I make this Rondeau for the dead :
The which I do communicate
To Courts and Pleas, ill doers' dread,
That unjust avarice do hate ;
That work for us early and late,
Until their bones and flesh are dry :
God and St. Dominick abate
Their sins unto them when they die.

LAY, OR RATHER RONDEAU.

On my release *from misery*,
Where I have left my life well nigh,
If Fate still look at me awry,
Judge how insatiable is she !
Methinks there is good reason why
She should at last appeasèd be
On my release.

Full of despite she is, perdie,
That would all joy to me deny :
God grant that in His house on high
A place be set apart for me
On my release !

CLIII.

THIS gift shall Lomer have of me,
(As sure as I'm a fairy's son :)
That he shall 'well-belovèd' be;
But wench or woman love he none,
Nor lose his head for any one.
For a few pieces, any night,
All men want of them may be done,
In spite of Holger the good knight.

CLIV.

Item, nothing to Jacques Cardon ;
For nothing he from me shall get,
For him to throw away upon
His mistress, La Bergeronnette :
Though, if she knew but 'Marionette'
(Composed for Marion Slow-to-come)
Or 'Hold your door open, Guillemette,'
She might a first-class whore become.

CLV.

To lovers sick and sorrowful,
(As well as Alain Chartier's Lay,)
At bedhead, a piscina-full
Of tears I give, and eke a spray

Of eglatere or flowering May,
 (To sprinkle with) in time of green ;
 Provided they a *Psalter* say
 To save poor Villon's soul from teen.

CLVI.

To Master James, that day and night
 Himself at making wealth doth kill,
 I give as many girls to plight
 (But none to marry) as he will.
 For whom doth he his coffers fill ?
 For those that are his kin, alack !
 That which the sows' was, I hold ill
 Should to the porkers not go back.

CLVII.

Unto the Seneschal I bequeath,—
 (Who once from debt did me release)
 Besides the quality of Smith,—
 The right of shoeing ducks and geese.
 I send him all these fooleries,
 For his amusement, or no less
 To make him pipe-lights, if he please :
 In singing is much weariness.

CLVIII.

The Captain of the Watch, also,
Two proper youths to serve as page ;
Marquet the Stout and Philippot ;
Who served (whence are they the more sage)
The Blacksmith's Provost. Well-a-way !
If they should chance to lose their wage,
They must go shoeless many a day.

CLIX.

Unto the 'Chaplain' let there pass
My simple-tonsure chapelry,
Charged but with saying a low mass :
There little letters needed be.
My cure of souls he should of me
Have had, an if he would, I guess :
But no one to confess cares he,
Save chambermaids and mistresses.

CLX.

Since my intent he well doth know,
To Jehan de Calais—(worthy wight !
That knew me thirty years ago,
And has not since on me set sight)—

If in this Testament I write
 Or hitch or doubt by chance befall,
 I give full power to set it right
 And solve contentions, one and all :

CLXI.

To glose upon it and comment,
 Define, eliminate, prescribe,
 Diminish aught or aught augment,
 Authenticate it or transcribe
 Of his own hand (were he no scribe) :
 Whatever meaning he think fit,
 At pleasure, good or bad, ascribe ;
 He has my sanction, every whit.

CLXII.

And if, perchance, some legatee,
 Without my knowledge, should be dead,
 It shall at the discretion be
 Of Jehan de Calais aforesaid
 To see my will interpreted,
 And otherwise the gift apply ;
 Nor take it for himself instead :
 I charge him on his soul thereby.

CLXIII.

Item, my body, I ordain,
Shall at St. Avoye buried be:
And that my friends may there again
My image and presentment see,
Let one the semblant limn of me
In ink, if that be not too dear.
No other monument, perdie :
The weight would split the floor, I fear.

CLXIV.

Item, I will that over it
That which ensues, without word more,
In letters large enough be writ :
If ink fail (as I said before)
Let them the words with charcoal score,
So they do not the plaster drag :
'Twill serve to keep my name in store,
As that of a good crack-brained wag.

Epitaph.

CLXV.

HERE LIES AND SLUMBERS IN THIS PLACE
 ONE WHOM LOVE WREAKED HIS IRE UPON :
 A SCHOLAR, POOR OF GOODS AND GRACE,
 THAT HIGHT OF OLD FRANÇOIS VILLON :
 ACRE OR FURROW HAD HE NONE.
 'T IS KNOWN HIS ALL HE GAVE AWAY ;
 BREAD, TABLE, TRESSELS, ALL ARE GONE.
 GALLANTS, OF HIM THIS RONDEL SAY.

RONDEL.

*Æternam Requiem dona,
 Lord God, and everlasting light,
 To him who never had, poor wight,
 Platter, or aught thereon to lay !
 Stripped bare he was, in every way,
 Like turnips, scraped and peeled and white.
 Æternam Requiem dona.*

*Exile compelled him many a day ;
 And death at last his back did smite,
 Though 'I appeal' with all his might
 The man in good plain speech did say.
 Æternam Requiem dona.*

CLXVI.

Item, I will they toll for me
The 'Belfry' Bell, that is so great
Of voice, that all astonished be
When he is tolled, early or late.
Many a good city, of old date,
He saved, as every one doth know ;
For war and plunderers abate
When thro' the land his voices go.

CLXVII.

Four loaves the ringers' wage shall be :
If that's too little, six : (that is
What rich folk wont to give for fee :)
But they St. Stephen's loaves, I wis,
Shall be. Let Vollant share in this ;
A man that earns his living hard :
'Twill furnish forth a week of his.
The other one ? Jehan de la Garde.

CLXVIII.

All the above to end to bring,
As my executors I name
Men who are fair in everything,
And never shirk an honest claim :

They are no great vauntards, all the same,
Though they've the wherewithal to be.

They shall fulfil my thought and aim :
Write, I will name six names to thee.

CLXIX.

First, Master Martin de Bellefaye,
The King's Lieutenant-criminel.
Who shall be next ? Whom shall I say ?
It shall be Messire Colombel :
If, as I think, it like him well,
He'll undertake this charge for me.
The third one ? Michel Jouvenel :
I give the office to these three.

CLXX.

But yet, in case they should excuse
Themselves therefrom, for fear of fees,
Or altogether should refuse,
I name as their successors these,
All honest folk in their degrees :
Philip Bruneau, the noble knight ;
The next, his neighbour (an he please)
That Master Jacques Raguyer hight.

CLXXI.

Master Jacques James shall be the third:
Three men of honour and renown,
That for believers in God's Word
And right God-fearing souls are known ;
For rather would they spend their own
Than not my full intent fulfil.
No auditor on them shall frown :
They shall do all at their own will.

CLXXII.

The Register of Wills from me
Shall have nor quid nor quod, I trow :
But every penny of his fee
To Tricot, the young priest, shall go ;
Unto whose health gladly eno'
I'd drink, though it my nightcap cost :
If how to gamble he did know,
Of Perrette's Den I'd make him host.

CLXXIII.

William du Ru, for funeral,
Shall see the chapel duly lit ;
And as to who shall bear the pall,
Let my executors order it.

And now, my body every whit
 (Pubes, hair, beard, eyebrows and all)
 Being racked with pain, the time seems fit
 To cry folk mercy, great and small.

BALLAD CRYING ALL FOLK MERCY.

I.

FRÈRES, be they white or be they gray;
 Devotees, lazars that beg their bread
 With wallet and clapdish on each highway;
 Whores and their bullies, apparellèd
 In tight-fitting surcoats, white and red;
 Gallants, whose boots o'er their ankles fall,
 That turn every wife's and maiden's head,—
 I cry folk mercy, one and all.

II.

Wenches that all their breasts display,
 That thereby gallants to them be led;
 Mountebanks, jugglers by the way;
 Clowns with their apes and carpet spread;

*Players that whistle for lustihead,
As they trudge it 'twixt village and town and hall;
Gentle and simple, living and dead,—
I cry folk mercy, one and all.*

III.

*Save only the treacherous beasts of prey,
That made me to feed on prison bread
And water, many a night and day.
I fear them not now a shake of the head:
And gladly (but that I lie a-bed,
And have small stomach for strife or brawl)
I'd have my wreak of them. Now, instead,
I cry folk mercy, one and all.*

ENVOL.

*So one might cudgel each rascal's head,
And baste his ribs with an oaken maul
Or some stout horsewhip weighted with lead,
I cry folk mercy, one and all.*

BALLAD.

I.

HERE is ended (both great and small)
Poor Villon's Testament ! When he is
dead,
Come, I pray, to his funeral,
Whilst the bell tinkles overhead.
Come all vested in garments red :
For to Love martyr did he die.
Thereof he swore upon his head,
Whenas he felt his end draw nigh.

II.

For me, I warrant it true in all ;
For of his love, in shameful stead,
He was beaten off, like a tennis-ball.
From here to Rousillon did he tread,
And hung his rags on each brier's bed ;
And still they hang there, shoulder-high.
So, without leasing, Villon said,
Whenas he felt his end draw nigh.

III.

*In such ill places his life did fall,
He had not a rap when he was sped :
And (still more luckless) when death did call,
Love's dart still rankled with poisoned head
In him. His heart was heavy as lead,
And scald tears stood in his dying eye :
At his despair we were wonderèd,
Whenas he felt his end draw nigh.*

Envol.

*Prince, that art haught as a hawk well bred,
Hear what he did when he came to die :
He drank a wng draught of the vine-juice red,
Whenas he felt his end draw nigh.*

Here endeth the Greater Testament of Master Francis
Villon.

DIVERS POEMS.

Here follow divers Poems of Master Francis Villon,
not being part of his Lesser and Greater Testaments.

BALLAD OF VILLON IN PRISON.

I.

H AVE pity, friends, have pity now, I pray,
If it so please you, at the least, on me !
I lie in fosse, not under hedge or may,
In this duresse, wherein, alas ! I dree
Ill fate, as God hath ordered it to me.
I prithee, ladies, lovers, young and old,
Dancers and mountebanks, alert and bold,
Nimble as quarrel from a crossbow shot,
Singers, that troll as clear as bells of gold,—
Will you all leave poor Villon here to rot ?

II.

Clerks, that go carolling the livelong day,
Scant-pursed, but glad and soul and body free ;
Wandering at will along the broad highway,
Hairbrained, perchance, but wit-whole too, perdie :
Lo ! now, I die, whilst that you absent be.

Song-singers, when poor Villon's days are told,
You shall sing psalms for him and candles hold ;

Here light nor air nor levin enter not,
Where prison-walls do closely him enfold :

Will you all leave poor Villon here to rot?

III.

Consider but his piteous array,

High and fair lords, of suit and service free,
That nor to king nor kaiser homage pay,

But straight from God in heaven hold your fee !

Come fast or feast, all days alike fasts he,
Whence are his teeth like rakes grown to behold :
No table hath he but the sheer black mould :

After dry bread (not manchets) pot on pot
They empty down his throat of water cold :

Will you all leave poor Villon here to rot?

ENVOI.

Princes and noble barons, young and old,
Besiege the King for letters sealed and scrolled

To draw me from this dungeon : for, God wot,
Even swine, when one squeaks in the butcher's fold,
Flock round their fellow and do squeak and scold.

Will you all leave poor Villon here to rot?

THE QUATRAIN THAT VILLON MADE
WHEN HE WAS DOOMED TO DIE.

I 'M Francis—ill avails it me—
Born near Pontoise, in Paris see :
Whose neck, at the end of a rope of three,
Must feel how heavy my buttocks be.

VARIANT OF THE FOREGOING
EPITAPH.

F RANCIS I'm called, woe worth it me !
Corbueil my surname is aright :
Native of Auvers, in Paris see ;
Of folk for sobriquet Villon hight.
Now shall my neck, from a cross of tree,
Judge if my buttocks heavy be.
But for the Ballad thereon I've made,
The game scarce seems to me worth to be
played.

EPITAPH IN BALLAD-FORM THAT
VILLON MADE FOR HIMSELF AND
HIS COMPANIONS, EXPECTING NO
BETTER THAN TO BE HANGED IN
THEIR COMPANY.

I.

BROTHERS that after us in life remain,
Let not your hearts towards us be of stone ;
For if to pity us poor wights you're fain,
God shall the rather grant you benison.
You see us six, dead, hanging every one :
As to the flesh that we too well have fed,
It is all bit by bit devoured and dead.
Let none make merry of our piteous case,
Whose bones, alas ! are rotting in their stead :
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace !

II.

Yea, we conjure you, look not with disdain,
Brothers, on us, that we to death were done
By justice. Well you know, the saving grain
Of sense springs not in every mother's son :

Wherefore, pray for us, now that we're undone,
 To Christ, the Son of Mary's maidenhead,
 That He leave not His grace on us to shed
 And save us from the nether torture-place.
 Let none work woe on us: we are well sped:
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace!

III.

We are all blanched and soddened of the rain,
 And eke dried up and blackened of the sun:
 Ravens and corbies have our eyes out-ta'en
 And plucked our beard and hair out, one by one.
 Whether by night or day, rest have we none:
 Now here, now there, at the wind's lustihead,
 We swing and creak and rattle overhead,
 No thimble dinted like our bird-pecked face.
 Folk, mock us not that are forspent and dead:
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace!

ENVOL.

Prince Jesus, that o'er all art Lord and Head,
 Let us not fall into the Place of Dread;
 But all our reckoning with the Fiend efface.
 Brothers, be warned and shun the life we led:
The rather pray, God grant us of His grace!

THE REQUEST OF VILLON, PRESENTED
TO THE HIGH COURT OF PARLIA-
MENT, IN BALLAD-FORM.

I.

ALL my five senses, eyes, nose, mouth in face,
Hearing and touch, and you, my limbs, as well ;
Each part of me that aye has known disgrace,--
Let each after this fashion speak and tell :
‘ Most Sovereign Court, by whom we here befell,
Thou that didst rescue us from perilous ways,
The tongue alone may not suffice to praise
Thee in such strain of honour as it should :
Wherefore to thee our voices all we raise,
Sister of angels, mother of the good !’

II.

Heart, cleave in sunder, or in any case
Be not more hardened and impermeable
Than was the black rock in the desert-space,
Wherfrom did water for the Hebrews well.
Melt into tears and mercy cry, as well
Befits a lowly heart that humbly prays :

Give to the Court, the kingdom's succour, praise,—
The Frenchman's stay, the help of strangerhood,
Created of high heaven in old days :
Sister of angels, mother of the good !

III.

And you, my teeth, let each one leave his place ;
Come forward all, and louder than bell,
Organ or clarion, render thanks for grace,
And every thought of eating now repel.
Consider but the doom on me that fell
And palsied heart, spleen, liver with affrays :
And you, my body, (else you were more base
Than bear, or swine that in the dunghill brood,)
Ere worse befall you, give the Court the praise,
Sister of angels, mother of the good !

ENVOL.

Prince, of thy grace deny me not three days,
To bid my friends adieu and go my ways :
Without them, I've nor money, clothes nor food.
Triumphant Court, do as thy suppliant says ;
Sister of angels, mother of the good !

BALLAD OF VILLON'S APPEAL.

I.

G ARNIER, how like you my appeal?
 Did I wisely, or did I ill?
 Each beast looks to his own skin's weal :
 If any bind him against his will,
 He does himself free to the best of his skill.
 When then, perforce, to me was sung
 This pleasant psalm of a sentence, still
Was it a time to hold my tongue?

II.

Were I of Capet's race somedele
 (That were but butchers on Montmartre hill)
 They had not bound me with iron and steel,
 And forced me to swizzle more than my fill :
 (You know the trick of it, will or nill ?)
 But, when with evil intent and wrong,
 They forced me to swallow this bitter pill,
Was it a time to hold my tongue?

III.

Think you that under my cap I feel
 Not wisdom enough nor any skill

Sufficient to say, 'I do appeal'?
 Enough was left me (as warrant I will)
 To keep me from holding my clapper still,
 When jargon that meant 'You shall be hung'
 They read to me from the notary's bill :
Was it a time to hold my tongue?

ENVOL.

Prince, had I had the pip in my bill,
 Long before this I should have swung,
 A scarecrow over Montfaucon hill!
Was it a time to hold my tongue?

BALLAD OF PROVERBS.

I.

GOATS scratch until they spoil their bed :
 Pitcher to well too oft we send :
 The iron's heated till it's red,
 And hammered till in twain it rend :
 The tree grows as the twig we bend :
 Men journey till they disappear
 Even from the memory of a friend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

II.

Some mock until their hearts do bleed :
 Some are so frank that they offend :
 Some waste until they come to need :
 A promised gift is ill to spend :
 Some love God till as priests they end :
 Wind changes till the sky is clear :
 Till forced to borrow do we lend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

III.

Dogs fawn on us till them we feed :
 Song's sung until by heart it's kenned :
 Fruit's kept until it rot to seed :
 The leaguered place falls in the end :
 Folk linger till the occasion wend :
 Haste oft throws all things out of gear :
 One kisses till the arms are strained :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

ENVOI.

Prince, fools live so long that they mend :
 They go so far that they draw near :
 Their will's opposed until it bend :
We shout out 'Noël' till it's here.

BALLAD OF THINGS KNOWN AND
UNKNOWN.

I.

F LIES in the milk I know full well :
I know men by the clothes they wear :
I know the walnut by the shell :
I know the foul sky from the fair :
I know the pear-tree by the pear :
When things go well, to me is shown :
I know who work and who forbear :
I know all save myself alone.

II.

I know the pourpoint by the fell :
And by his gown I know the frère :
Master from varlet can I tell :
And nuns that cover up their hair :
I know a swindler by his air,
And fools that fat on cates have grown :
Wines by the cask I can compare :
I know all save myself alone.

III.

I know how horse from mule to tell :
 I know the load each one can bear :
 I know both Beatrice and Bell :
 I know the hazards, odd and pair :
 I know of visions in the air :
 I know the power of Peter's throne,
 And how misled Bohemians were :
I know all save myself alone.

ENVOL.

Prince, I know all things : fat and spare,
 Ruddy and pale, to me are known ;
 And Death that endeth all our care :
I know all save myself alone.

BALLAD OF POOR CUTPURSES.

I.

MEN talk of those the fields that till ;
 Of those that sift out chaff from corn ;
 Of him that has, will he or nill,
 A wife that scoldeth night and morn,—
 As folk hard driven and forlorn :

Of men that often use the sea ;
Of monks that of poor convents be ;
 Of those behind the ass that go :
But when all things consider we,
Poor cutpurses have toil eno'.

II.

To govern boys and girls with skill,
God wot, 's no labour lightly borne :
Nor to serve ladies at Love's will ;
 Or do knight suit at sound of horn,
 (Helmet and harness always worn,)
And follow arms courageously :
To joust and tilt with spears, perdie,
 And quintain play, is hard, I know :
But when all things consider we,
Poor cutpurses have toil eno'.

III.

God wot, they suffer little ill
 By whom wheat's reaped and meadows shorn ;
Or those that thresh corn for the mill,
 Or plead the Parliament beforne :
To borrow money's lightly borne :

Tinkers and carters have to dree
 But little hardship, seemeth me ;
 Nor does Lent irk us much, I trow :
 But when all things consider we,
Poor cutpurses have toil eno'.

[*ENVOI deest.*]

BALLAD OF FORTUNE.

1.

I OF old times by makers Fortune hight,—
 That thou, Francis, dost oftentimes decry,—
 If I do find a well-renowmèd wight,
 I grind him to the dust with poverty,
 And raise him statues when he comes to die :
 Wherefore bemoanest thou ? If thou live ill,
 Thou art not singular : so, peace, be still.
 Recall how many valiant men of war
 I laid stark dead to stiffen in their gore.
 Hadst thou but rags for garments to put on,
 Yet were thy fortune passing theirs of yore :
Take my advice,—all in good part, Villon.

II.

Of old I did address me oft to fight
Against great kings: for in the days gone by,
Priam I slew; and all his warlike might
Availed him nought, towers, walls or ramparts high
By Hannibal as ruthlessly dealt I,
Who was attaint in Carthage by my skill:
And Scipio Africanus did I kill:
Great Cæsar to the Senate I gave o'er,
And wrecked stout Pompey upon Egypt shore:
Jason I drowned by tempest; and anon
I gave Rome to the flames, and all its store:
Take my advice,—all in good part, Villon.

III.

I did undo that most renommed knight,
That longed to reach the backward of the sky
And caused much bloodshed, Alisander hight:
I made Arphaxad on the field to lie,
Dead, by his royal standard. Thus did I
Full many a time, and yet more will fulfil:
Nor time nor reason can awry my will.
Huge Holophernes, he that did adore
Strange gods, thro' me did Judith slay, and shore

His head off as he slept : and Absalon,
 I hanged him by his hair,—and many more :
Take my advice,—all in good part, Villon.

ENVOL.

Poor Francis, ponder well my counsel o'er :
 If I could aught without God's leave or lore,
 I'd leave no rag to thee or any one ;
 For each ill done I'd compass half a score :
Take my advice,—all in good part, Villon.

BALLAD OF FRENCH HONOUR.

1.

LET him meet beasts that breathe out fiery rain,
 Even as did Jason hard by Colchos town ;
 Or seven years changed into a beast remain,
 Nebuchadnezzar-like, to earth bowed down,
 Or suffer else such teen and mickle bale
 As Troy had (is it not in Homer's tale ?)
 For Helen's rape ten years and more to bear ;
 Or on his head, as Job did, ashes wear ;
 Or be as Tantalus of old romance ;
 Or feed, like Dædalus, on prison-fare,—
Who would wish ill unto the realm of France.

II.

Four months within a marsh let him plain,
Heron-like, with the mud up to his crown ;
Or sell him to the Ottoman for gain,
To serve as bullock to some country clown ;
Or thirty years, like Magdalen, without veil
Or vesture, let him his misdeeds bewail ;
Or with Narcissus death by drowning share ;
Or die like Absalom, hanged by the hair ;
Or Simon Magus, by his charms' mischance ;
Or Judas, mad with horror and despair,—
Who would wish ill unto the realm of France.

/

III.

If Nero's time might come but once again,
His molten gold should down his throat be thrown,
Or 'twixt two millstones else he should have lain,
Like to St. Victor ; or I'd have him drown
Far out to sea, where help and breath should fail,
Like Jonah in the belly of the whale ;
Let him be doomed the sunlight to forswear
And have no part in love or riches rare,
And be of God accurst to utterance,—
As was Antiochus the king, whilere,—
Who would wish ill unto the realm of France.

ENVOL.

Prince, let folk bear him to the wastes of air
 Or to the woods whose crown doth Glaucus wear,
 Or take his hope, and leave desesperance ;
 For he deserves not any fortune fair
Who would wish ill unto the realm of France.

BALLAD OF THE DEBATE OF THE
 HEART AND BODY OF VILLON.

I.

WHAT is't I hear ?—'Tis I, thy heart ; 'tis I
 That hold but by a threadling unto thee :
 I have nor force nor substance, all drained dry,
 Whenas thyself in this duresse I see,
 Like a poor cur, crouched up all shiveringly.—
 How comes it so ?—Of thine unwise liesse.—
 What irks it thee ?—It doth me sore distress.
 Leave me in peace—Why ?—I will cast about.—
 When will that be ?—When I'm past childishness.—
I say no more.—And I can do without.

II.

What deemest thou?—To mend before I die.—
 At thirty years?—'Tis a mule's age, perdie.—
 Is't youth?—Not so.—'Tis heat, then, that for aye
 Doth grip thee?—How?—By the nape.—Seemeth
 me

Nothing I know?—Yes, flies in milk that be:
 Thou canst tell black from white still at a press.—
 Is't all?—What words can *all* thy faults express?—
 If 't's not enough, we'll have another bout.—
 Thou'rt lost.—I'll struggle for it, none the less.—
I say no more.—And I can do without.

III.

The dule is mine: thou hast duresse thereby:
 If thou wert some poor idiot, happily
 Thou mightst have some excuse thy heart anigh.
 Have foul and fair no difference for thee,
 Or is thy head more hard than stone by sea?
 Or dost prefer to honour this duresse?
 Canst thou say aught in answer? Come, confess.—
 I shall be quit on't when I die, no doubt.—
 God! what a comfort 'gainst a present stress!—
I say no more.—And I can do without.

IV.

Whence comes this evil?—Surely, from on high :
When Saturn made me up my fardel, he
Put all these ills in.—'Tis a foolish lie :
Thou art Fate's master, yet its slave wilt be.
Hast thou ne'er read of Solomon's decree?
The wise, he says, no planets can oppress :
They and their influence owe him humbleness.—
I think not so : what they ordain falls out.—
What sayst thou?—'Tis the faith that I profess.—
I say no more.—And I can do without.

ENVOI.

Wilt thou live long?—If God so will it, yes.—
Then must thou— What?—Turn unto holiness ;
Read without cease.—In what?—In righteousness.—
I'll not forget.—Forsake the motley rout
And to amendment straightway thee address :
Delay not till thou come to hopelessness.
I say no more.—And I can do without.

BALLAD WRITTEN BY VILLON UPON
A SUBJECT PROPOSED BY CHARLES
DUC D'ORLEANS.

I.

I DIE of thirst, although the well's at hand ;
Hot as a fire, my teeth with cold do shake ;
In my own earth, I'm in a foreign land ;
Hard by a burning brazier, do I quake ;
Clad like a king, yet naked as a snake.
I laugh through tears, wait without hope soe'er,
And comfort take in midst of my despair ;
Glad, though I joy in nought beneath the sun ;
Potent I am, and yet as weak as air ;
Well entertained, disdained of every one.

II.

Nought's dim to me save what I understand ;
Uncertain things alone for sure I take ;
I doubt but facts that all for certain stand ;
I'm only wise by chance for a whim's sake ;
‘ Give you good-night ! ’ I say, whenas I wake ;
Lying at my length, ’gainst falls I do prepare ;
I've goods eno', yet not a crown to spare ;

Leave off a loser, though I've always won ;
 Await bequests, although to none I'm heir ;
Well entertained, disdained of every one.

III.

I care for nought, yet all my life I've planned
 Goods to acquire, although I've none at stake ;
 They speak me fairest, by whom most I'm banned,
 And truest, who most lightly me forsake ;
 He's most my friend, who causes me mistake
 Black ravens for white swans, and foul for fair ;
 Who does me hurt, I thank him for his care ;
 'Twixt truth and lying difference see I none ;
 Nought I conceive, yet all in mind I bear ;
Well entertained, disdained of every one.

ENVOL.

Most clement Prince, I'd have you be aware
 That I'm like all and yet apart and rare ;
 Much understand, yet wit and knowledge shun :
 To have my wage again is all my care ;
Well entertained, disdained of every one.

BALLAD OF VILLON'S REQUEST TO
THE DUC DE BOURBON.

I.

GRACIOUS my lord and prince of mickle
dread,
Flower of the Lily, Royal progeny,
Francis Villon, whom dule at last has led
To the blind strokes of Fate to bend the knee,
Sues by this humble writing unto thee,
That thou wilt of thy grace to him make loan.
Before all courts he will his bondage own ;
Doubt not he will content thee by and bye,
With interest thereunder due and grown :
Nothing but waiting shalt thou lose thereby.

II.

Of no prince has thy poor slave borrowèd,
Save of thyself, a single penny fee :
The six poor crowns were wholly spent in bread,
That whiles thy favour did advance to me.
All shall be paid together, I agree,
And that right soon, ere many days be flown:

For if in Patay wood are acorns known,
 Or chestnuts thereabouts folk sell and buy,
 Without delay thou shalt have back thine own :
Nothing but waiting shalt thou lose thereby.

III.

If I could sell my youth and lustihead
 Unto the Lombards, usurers that be,
 Lack-gold has brought me to such piteous stead,
 I do believe I should the venture dree.
 In purse or belt no money can I see :
 I wonder what it is, by God His throne !
 For unto me, save it be wood or stone,
 No cross at all appears,—I do not lie :
 But if the true cross once to me be shown,
Nothing but waiting shalt thou lose thereby.

ENVOI.

Prince of the Lys, that lov'st good deeds alone,
 Think'st thou it has not cost me many a groan
 That I can not to my intent draw nigh ?
 Give ear, if it so please thee, to my moan :
Nothing but waiting shalt thou lose thereby.

POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO VILLON.

Here follow sundry Poems commonly attributed to
Master Francis Willan.

RONDEL.

FAREWELL, *I say, with tearful eye.*
Farewell, the dearest sweet to see !

Farewell, o'er all the kindest she !
Farewell, with heavy heart say I.
Farewell, my love, my soul, good-bye !
My poor heart needs must part from thee:
Farewell, I say, with tearful eye.

Farewell, by whose default I die
Deaths more than told of tongue can be :
Farewell, of all the world to me
Whom most I blame and set most high !
Farewell, I say, with tearful eye.

A MERRY BALLAD OF VINTNERS.

I.

BY dint of dart, by push of sharpened spear,
 By sweep of scythe or thump of spike-set mace,
 By poleaxe, steel-tipped arrow-head or shear
 Of double-handed sword or well-ground ace,
 By dig of dirk or tuck with double face,
 Let them be done to death, or let them light
 On some ill stead, where brigands lurk by night,
 That they the hearts from out their breasts may
 tear,
 Cut off their heads, then drag them by the hair
 And cast them on the dunghill to the swine,
 That sows and porkers on their flesh may fare,
The vintners that put water in our wine.

II.

Let Turkish quarrels perforate their rear ;
 Or run the rogues with broadswords through the
 base ;
 Singe their perukes with Greek fire, ay, and sear
 Their brains with levins ; string them brace by brace
 Up to the gibbet : or for greater grace,
 Let gout and dropsy slay the knaves outright ;

Or else let drive into each felon wight
 Irons red-heated in the furnace-flare.
 Let half a score of hangmen flay them bare ;
 And on the morrow, seethed in oil or brine,
 Let four great horses rend them then and there,
The vintners that put water in our wine.

III.

Let some great gunshot blow their heads off sheer ;
 Let thunders catch them in the market-place ;
 Let rend their limbs and cast them far and near,
 For dogs to batten on their bodies base ;
 Or let the lightning both their eyes efface.
 Let frost and hail and snow upon them bite :
 Strip off their clothes and leave them naked quite,
 For rain to drench them in the open air ;
 Lard them with knives and poniards, and then bear
 Their carrión forth and soak it in the Rhine ;
 Break all their bones with mauls, and do not spare
The vintners that put water in our wine.

ENVOL.

Prince, may God curse their vitals ! is my prayer ;
 And may they burst with venom all, in fine,
 The treacherous thieves, accursèd and unfair,
The vintners that put water in our wine.

BALLAD OF THE TREE OF LOVE.

I.

I HAVE within my heart of hearts a tree,
 A plant of Love, fast rooted therewith ;
 That bears no fruit, save only misery ;
 Hardship its leaves, and trouble its flowers bin.
 But since to set it there Love did begin,
 It hath so mightily struck root and spread,
 That, for its shadow, all my cheer hath fled,
 And all my flowers do wither and decay :
 Yet win I not, of all my lustihead,
Other to plant, or tear the old away.

II.

Year after year, its branches watered be
 With tears as bitter and as salt as sin ;
 And yet its fruits no fairer are to see,
 Nor any comfort therefrom can I win :
 Yet pluck I them among the leavis thin ;
 My heart thereon full bitterly is fed,
 That better had lain fallow, ay, or dead,
 Than to bear fruits of poison and dismay :
 But Love his law allows me not instead
Other to plant, or tear the old away.

III.

If, in this time of May, when wood and lea
Are broidered all with leaves and blossoms sheen,
Love would vouchsafe this succour unto me,—
To prune away the boughs that lie between,
So that the sun among the buds be seen,
And imp thereon some graft of goodlihead,—
Full many pleasant burgeons would it shed,
Whence joy should spring, more lovely than the
day;
And no more were despair solicited
Other to plant, or tear the old away.

ENVOL.

Dear my Princess, my chiefest hope and dread,
To whom my heart is bound in lowly stead,
Look thou the wound that thou hast caused alay,
And suffer not thy constant thought be led
Other to plant, or tear the old away.

BALLAD OF LADIES' LOVE.

No. 1.

I.

WELL enough favoured and in purse not ill
 Provided, once it chanced in love I fell,—
 So deep indeed that, till I had my will,
 I languished day and night in flames of hell :—
 I loved a damsel more than I can tell ;
 But with good luck and rose-nobles a score,
 I had what men of maids have had before.
 Then, with myself considering, I did say :
 ‘ Love sets by pleasant speech but little store ;
The wealthy lover always gains the day.’

II.

And so it chanced that, while my purse was still
 Somedele replenished, things with me went well,
 And I was all in all with her, until,
 Without word said, my wench’s loose eyes fell
 Upon a graybeard, rich but foul as hell :
 A man more hideous never woman bore.
 But what of that ? He had his will and more :
 And I, confounded, stricken with dismay,
 Upon this text went glosing as before,
 ‘ *The wealthy lover always gains the day.*’

III.

Now she did wrong ; for never had she ill
Or spite of me : I cherished her so well,
That, had she bidden me the moon to steal,
I had essayed to storm heaven's citadel.
Yet, of sheer vice, her body did she sell
Unto the foul lust of that satyr hoar :
The which I seeing, of my clerkly lore
I made and sent to her a piteous lay :
And she : ' Lack-gold undid thee : ' and no more.
The wealthy lover always gains the day.

ENVOL.

Fair Prince, more skilled than any one of yore
In pleasant speech, look that thy purse's store
Run never short : that clerk so wise and gay,
Hight John of Meung, hath told us, o'er and o'er,
' *The wealthy lover always gains the day.*'

BALLAD OF LADIES' LOVE.

No. 2.

I.

HE who in love would bear the bell
 Needs must he prank him gallantly,
 Swagger and ruffle it, bold and snell :
 And when to his lady's sight comes he,
 Don cloth of gold and orfèvrerie :
 For ladies likен a goodly show.
 This should serve well ; but, by Maré,
It is not every one can do so.

II.

Not long ago in love I fell
 With a lady gracious and sweet to see,
 Who spoke me fair, that she liked me well
 And gladly would grant her love to me,
 But first I must give to her for fee
 Fifty gold crowns, nor less nor mo.
 'Fifty gold crowns ! . . . So let it be :
It is not every one can do so.'

III.

To bed I went with the damozel ;
And there four times right merrily
I did to her what I may not tell,
In less than an hour and a half, perdie.
Then with a failing voice said she :
'Once more, for pity, before you go !'
'Once more, sweetheart ? Ah, woe is me !
It is not every one can do so !

Envoy.

Prince, I crave on my bended knee,
If ever again I lay her low,
Grant that my lance well-tempered be :
It is not every one can do so.

Here endeth the Book of the Poems of Master Francis
Villon.

NOTES.

NOTES.

IN preparing the following, I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid encumbering the book with a quantity of unnecessary notes, bearing upon information within the reach of every educated person, and have confined myself to throwing light, to the best of my ability, upon such points as must of necessity be obscure to all but a special student of the old poet. Even this limited scheme must unavoidably be but imperfectly carried out: many of Villon's allusions to persons, places and things are at the present day hopelessly obscure and inexplicable, owing to our defective acquaintance with his life and times; and I have preferred to leave untouched the passages wherein they occur, rather than hamper the text with a mass of vague and purely conjectural explanations, which my readers are perfectly well qualified to suggest for themselves. Of the heroic guess-work of some former commentators (gentlemen of whose erudition I desire to speak with the utmost respect, and to the more serious part of whose labours I am indebted for much of the material of the ensuing notes), I can only say that it seems to me admirable, but hardly to be imitated. 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la critique.'

NOTES TO THE LESSER TESTAMENT.

Page 4, Stanza iv. l. 6. *With dusty feet*, i.e. from afar.

P. 6, St. ix. Villon seems here to burlesque the customs of chivalry, feigning himself a knight, and so bequeathing those articles that most concerned his knighthood to some relative charged to maintain the honour of the name.

P. 7, St. xii. *The White Horse, Mule, Diamond, and Striped Ass* were probably signs of well-known taverns. The Bull *Omnis utriusque sexus* was (according to the commentators) one ordering all Christians to confess at least once a year to their parish priest, and had lately been revived against the Mendicant Orders, by the repeal of an intermediate Bull authorising the latter to receive confessions in detriment to the rights of the regular clergy.

P. 9, St. xvi. l. 7. Clément Marot suggests that the shop in question was to be that of a scribe or public writer, which seems probable.

P. 9, St. xvii. l. 4. *Also the acorns willows bear.* This passage is unintelligible, as willows of course bear no *glands* or acorns. M. Prompsault, however, suggests that *saulsoye* may have been the name of some rich stuff or garment, perhaps a cloak to match the hood above mentioned.

P. 10, St. xix. According to M. Lacroix, the Castles of Nygeon and Bicêtre near Paris were both in ruins in Villon's time, and the haunt of numerous bands of thieves and vagabonds.

bonds. They were probably well known to Villon, who facetiously bequeaths the right of shelter in them to Montigny and Grigny, fellow-rogues of his.

P. 10, St. xx. *The Puppet Wine-shop.* L'Abreuvoyer Poupin, a well-known resort of rogues and vagabonds on the Pont Neuf, the 'Paul Niquet' of the Middle Ages. *The Fineapple Tavern.* Le Cabaret de la Pomme de Pin, the most famous of its time in Paris, situate in the Rue de la Juiverie, and mentioned by many writers of the day.

P. 11, St. xxi. l. 3. *That baron's grace.* The baron alluded to appears to have been the Lieutenant-Criminel of Paris. Jehan Mautainct and Pierre Basanier were officials of his (the Châtelet) Court.

P. 11, St. xxii. l. 2. Villon leaves the chief of the watch a helmet, *vizor-close*, that he may be unable to see what the poet and his roguish companions are about. It is with the same intention that he, in the Greater Testament (see St. xcvi.) bequeaths cotton nightcaps to the sergeants.

P. 12, St. xxiii. Some sort of play appears to be here intended upon the word *Barre* in its heraldic sense of bend sinister or sign of illegitimacy, and its mediæval meaning of merchant's bar or counter.

P. 12, St. xxiv. *Chollet* and *Jehan le Loup* were thieves of Villon's acquaintance. It seems uncertain whether he refers to the ducks and geese kept by the city of Paris and adjacent commoners upon the water-moats, or to the prostitutes (known by the cant terms of *oies* and *cancettes*) who used to haunt the dry moats after sundown.

P. 14, St. xxix. l. i. *The house in Anthony Street*, i.e. the Bastille prison.

P. 14, St. xxx. l. 3. *The lodgers 'neath the stalls*, i.e. the beggars and vagabonds who used to lie under the out-of-door booths or stalls by night.

P. 15, St. xxxii. l. 6. *The Fifteen Signs*. *Les Quinze Signes du Jugement dernier*, a favourite theme of mediæval homily and morality.

P. 16, St. xxxiii. *Le Mortier d'Or*. Probably the sign of some well-known shop or tavern at Paris, facetiously bequeathed to Jehan de la Garde, in allusion to his nickname of 'Epicier.' The *pestle from St. Maur* would seem to have been a gibbet. (The legatee, as a sergeant of the watch, was of course one of Villon's natural enemies.) I believe the double-handed pestle was at one time called *potence*, on account of its resemblance to an ordinary cross-barred gallows. In the seventh line of the same stanza Villon says, *St. Anthony roast him full sore!* alluding to the erysipelatous disease known as St. Anthony's fire.

P. 16, St. xxxiv. *Gouvieux* (says M. Lacroix) was a castle on the Oise, of which Peter de Ronseville was probably governor. It is possible that Villon had been imprisoned there, and made this bequest to the gaolers, in derisive memory of his sufferings at their hands.

NOTES TO THE GREATER TESTAMENT.

P. 23, St. v. l. 5. *'Twould be but such as Picards' were.* The Picards or heretics of the Walloon country were popularly credited with dispensing altogether with prayer, probably from the fact that they eschewed prayers for the dead.

P. 23, St. vi. l. 8. *The seventh verse of the Psalm Deus laudem.* This is the eighth verse of Psalm cix. of the English version (*Hold not Thy tongue, O God of my praise!*), and stands thus, *Let his days be few and another take his office.* Villon's intention in applying it to the Bishop of Orleans is still more obvious when we compare the Vulgate version, 'Fiant dies ejus pauci et episcopatum ejus accipiat alter.'

P. 26, St. xii. l. 8. *Averrhœs his Comment*, i.e. upon Aristotle.

P. 36, St. xxxvi. l. 5. *Jacques Cœur.* The great French merchant and patriot, whose liberality enabled Charles VII. to accomplish the reconquest of France, and who afterwards fell into disgrace through Court intrigues.

P. 36, St. xxxvii. l. 2. *Alas! no longer is he one.* Alluding of course to Jacques Cœur.

P. 40. FIRST BALLAD OF OLD-TIME LORDS, iii. 6. *Lancelot, King of Behaine.* This appears to be intended for no other than the fabulous hero of La Mort d'Arthur, Lancelot du Lac, King of Bayonne or Behaine.

P. 45. LA BELLE HEAULMIÈRE. *The fair Helm-maker or wearer.* Opinions are divided as to whether this personage was a woman of loose life, so called from the tall cap, *helm* or *hennin*, said to have been worn by her class, or a grisette whose occupation was the manufacture or sale of such articles.

P. 57, St. lvii. l. 4. *That a felt hat a mortar was.* The *mortier* or square cap worn by the Judges of the Parliament is probably alluded to here.

P. 59, St. lxiii. ll. 2 and 3. *Made me drink of water cold so much.* An allusion to the question by water, which Villon

appears to have more than once undergone during his confinement in Meung gaol.

P. 62, St. lxviii. ll. 7 and 8. *Nor will I make it manifest, Except unto the realm of France.* It appears to have been in Villon's time obligatory, or at all events customary, to deposit (or *manifest*) wills with an ecclesiastical official during the lifetime of the testator. Villon afterwards (see St. clxxii.) expresses his intention of cheating the Registrar of Wills of his fees.

P. 74, St. lxxxvii. *The Mare and Brick-red Ass*, probably tavern-signs.

P. 75, St. xci. *The Great Stone Jug of Grève.* Le Grand Godet de Grève, the name of a well-known low wine-shop at Paris.

P. 79, St. ci. ll. 2 and 3. *One hundred cloves of zinziber.* There is here an untranslatable play of words upon the word *clou*, in its double meaning of *nail* and *clove*. Ginger was reputed a potent aphrodisiac in the Middle Ages.

P. 80, St. cii. l. 3. *Wolvis-meat.* Evidently intended as a punning allusion to Villon's roguish comrade, Jehan le Loup.

P. 81, St. cv. l. 8. *The Abbess of Shaven-poll.* Huguette du Hamel, Abbess of Port Royal or Pourras, near Paris, a dissolute woman, whose shameless debaucheries earned her the popular perversion of her title to *Abbesse de Poil-Ras* or *Shaven-poll*, the cant name for a prostitute who had been pilloried.

P. 82, St. cviii. l. 5. *Meung.* Jehan de Meung, one of the authors of the *Roman de la Rose*.

P. 86. BALLAD AND ORISON, i. 5. *Architriclinus.* *Apxi-*

τρίκλινος, the Greek designation of the *governor of the feast* at the marriage in Cana.

P. 88, St. cxviii. l. 3. *Donatus*. The Latin grammar of the day, *ÆLIUS DONATUS de octo partibus orationis*.

P. 90, St. cxxiii. l. 1. *The Clerks Eighteen*. Le Collège des Dix-Huit at Paris was founded in the time of St. Louis for the education of poor students.

P. 91, St. cxxvi. ll. 1, 2, 3. *The Castle of Billy* appears to have been in the same ruinous and thief-haunted state as Nygeon and Bicêtre. Grigny seems to have been a coiner.

P. 92, St. cxxviii. l. 8. *The Lord who serves St. Christopher*. The nobleman alluded to here is Robert d'Estouteville, Provost of Paris, in honour of whose marriage with Ambraise de Loré, Villon composed the Ballad that follows, presumably in his student-days. The Provost would appear to have made some special vow of service to St. Christopher, according to frequent mediæval custom.

P. 93. BALLAD FOR A NEWLY-MARRIED GENTLEMAN, ii. 3 and 4. *Fair laurel . . . swet wild rose*. There is an evident allusion here to the respective heraldic bearings of the newly-married couple.

P. 94, St. cxxx. According to M. Lacroix, there is some ground for the supposition that the offence with which the Perdryers are charged by Villon was that of inoculating the latter with an infamous disease by the use of unnatural violence; but the stanza seems clearly to point to an information laid by François Perdryer against Villon, in consequence of which the poet was punished for some one of his numerous escapades by the Parliament of Bourges. Perdryer

was probably an accomplice of Villon's, and doubtless became King's evidence against him for some offence committed in company. The stanza is, however, like many others in the book, hopelessly inexplicable as a whole, from our want of knowledge of the special circumstances to which it refers.

P. 95, St. cxxxi. l. i. *Taillevent*. *Le Viandier de Maitre Taillevent*, cook to Charles VII., was the popular cookery-book of the time.

P. 97, St. cxxxii. THE COUNTERBLAST TO FRANC-GONTIER. *Les Dietz de Franc-Gontier*, by Philippe de Vitré, Bishop of Meaux, was a popular pastoral romance of the fourteenth century, celebrating the delights of a country life: it was imitated in another book, entitled *Les Contredietz de Franc-Gontier*, in which are set forth the discomforts of a pastoral life and the hardships that arose from the oppression of the squires and seigneurs of the time, personified in a character called *le Tyran*, and modelled upon some great nobleman of the day.

P. 100, St. cxxxiv. l. 2. *Mademoiselle de Bruyères*. A good and charitable Parisian lady of the day, who seems to have endeavoured to reclaim the *filles de joie* of her time.

P. 103, St. cxxxviii. ll. 1 and 2. *Wenches who Have fathers, mothers, aunts . . .* i.e. prostitutes. Brothel-keepers and procuresses have always borne some such name as *tante*, expressing their relation to the unfortunates under their control.

P. 107, St. cxlii. l. 8. *Master Hal*. Maître Henriot, the executioner of Paris.

P. 112. St. cxlvii. l. i. *The Fifteen-Score*. The name

(Quinze-Vingts) of a hospital at Paris founded by St. Louis for the reception of three hundred poor blind men, who were bound by the terms of their foundation to furnish mourners for all funerals taking place in the adjoining Cemetery of the Innocents.

P. 116, St. clvi. ll. 7 and 8. There appears to be some equivoque intended here upon the popular meaning of the word *truie*, i.e. prostitute.

P. 116, St. clvii. *The Seneschal* mentioned here appears to have been Louis de Bourbon, Seneschal et Mareschal du Bourbonnais, who is thought to have sheltered Villon during his second exile, at his town of Rousillon in Dauphiné. The third line contains a play of words upon his title of *Mareschal* (technicè, *blacksmith*), and the fourth a probable allusion to the Prince's amorous disposition, *oies et canettes* being (as before mentioned) cant terms for women of loose life.

P. 117, St. clviii. l. 5. *The Blacksmiths' Provost.* Tristan l'Hermite.

P. 117, St. clix. l. i. *The Chaplain.* Probably a member of Villon's gang, so nicknamed.

P. 119, St. clxiii. l. 2. According to M. Lacroix, the Convent of St. Avoye was the only one at Paris that was situate on the second floor, and consequently contained no burial-place.

P. 121, St. clxvi. l. 2. *The 'Belfry' Bell.* The largest of the bells of Notre Dame, called *Le Beffroi*, and rung only on great occasions.

P. 121, St. clxvii. l. 4. *St. Stephen's loaves*, i.e. stones.

P. 123, St. clxxii. l. 8. *Perrette's Den.* Le Trou Perrette, a low cabaret and gambling-hell at Paris.

NOTES TO DIVERS AND SUNDY POEMS.

P. 131. BALLAD OF VILLON IN PRISON. Written in Meung gaol.

P. 134. EPITAPH IN BALLAD-FORM. Written whilst awaiting execution for the burglary committed on the Collège de Navarre in 1456. The two following Ballads appear to have been composed on the same occasion. The actual appeal to the Parliament against the sentence of death has not been handed down to us. Through the kindness of M. Alphonse Pages, I am enabled to reproduce a mediæval vignette illustrating this Ballad and two facsimiles of fifteenth-century manuscript and printed copies of the same poem, all of which have already appeared in M. Pages' valuable and interesting *recueil*, 'Les Grands Poètes Français.'

P. 138. BALLAD OF VILLON'S APPEAL, i. 1. *Garnier*. The procureur or proctor who defended Villon on this occasion.

ii. 1 and 2. Hugues Capet, the founder of the Bourbon dynasty, is said to have been a butcher at Montmartre.

P. 139. BALLAD OF PROVERBS. It is hardly necessary to remark that the point of the refrain lies in the contemporary use of the word *Noël* (Christmas) as an exclamation in the sense of *Hurrah!* or *Vivat!* &c.

P. 142. BALLAD OF THINGS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN,

iii. 7. *How misled Bohemians were.* The allusion here is supposed to be to the Hussite movement.

P. 142. BALLAD OF POOR CUTPURSES. The title of this Ballad, as generally received (Ballade des pauvres houssieurs), is evidently wrong. It seems to me probable that by some copyist's error (the possibility of which no one who is familiar with mediæval handwriting will doubt) the letter *h* in the last word has been substituted for *tr*, and that the true reading is therefore *pauvres troussieurs* (or *detroussieurs*), 'poor cutpurses,' a class to which Villon himself (at all events from time to time) belonged, and with whose hardships he would naturally sympathise.

P. 148. BALLAD OF FRENCH HONOUR, Envoi, l. 2. *The woods whose crown doth Glaucus wear.* An affected periphrasis for *the sea*.

P. 148. THE DEBATE OF THE HEART AND BODY OF VILLON. Probably written in Meung gaol.

P. 153. BALLAD OF VILLON'S REQUEST, ii. 7. According to M. Prompsault, there never was a wood at or near Patay.

P. 154. BALLAD OF VILLON'S REQUEST, iii. 7, 8, 9. An audacious play of words is here intended, founded upon the double meaning of the word *croix*, i.e. *cross* and *money*, e.g. the well-known locution *Il n'a ni croix ni pile*—'He has not a rap.' The obverse of the coin of the time, now distinguished by the portrait of the prince issuing it, was then generally stamped with a cross, the reverse being called *pile*, a designation that still survives. The mention of *the true cross* in the ninth line is a daring allusion to the famous *Vraie croix de St. Lô*, for which Louis XI. professed a special devotion.

P. 157. RONDEL. This and the four following Ballads are probably not by Villon ; but as they have considerable merit of their own, and are generally included in his works, I have thought it well to translate them. The Ballad of the Tree of Love is probably due to Charles d'Orleans, or to some poet of his school, who had (like himself) resided in England, and to some extent caught the spirit of Chaucer. The two Ballads of Ladies' Love are probably of considerably later date, possibly altogether comparatively recent imitations of the ancient style. The first may perhaps be attributed to Clément Marot, whose style it somewhat resembles, the second to Coquillart. The Merry Ballad of Vintners is the only one that bears any trace of Villon's hand, and may possibly be an early or inferior specimen of his work.

FACSIMILES.

freres humains qui ayent noulme
 nalgles autres contre nous enditez
 Ces sepeulz devons pourvoe aux
 Dieux en ains plus longt de bon meury
 Dame nous bonz et atachis amys
 Quant de la chate trop anoyez monsieur
 Elle est pire de vore et pourvoe
 et nous les os de vore sandre et pourvoe
 De nos malz esamez n'escuse
 Ains prouz dieu et tunc nos brallez a fouldre

De bons clameurs faitz par mes deuz
 Amours de deauz quoyz fusmez come
 Par la fure tressor deur fure
 Et bons hommz vont par bon fure. Rappelz
 Interrodez deur de meur rassise
 Et meur lez de la deure meur
 O fa grise pour nous n'escuse
 Amours par force de l'insurale fouldre
 Nous somes or mous ames moyz hame
 Mais prouz dure tressor deur deur deur

J'apluys non a debus, a l'ours,
 Et le son de la chouette, a monours
 Pour ce que l'ours n'a pas de voile pour
 Et quand il aboie, il le son de
 Jamais nul temps n'ouvre son oreille
 Pour ce que l'ours n'a pas de voile pour
 De son plaisir sans effort nous chavir
 Plus le chien de l'ours que de l'ours
 Ne song donc de nos confidences
 Mais pour dire que nous n'oublions pas

Dame que que son temps furent
 Garder que que son temps furent
 De l'ours que que son temps furent
 Dame que que son temps furent
 Mais pour dire que nous n'oublions pas

From an Edition of the 15th Century.

freres humains q̄ apres nous viues
 Napez les cœurs contre no⁹ endurcis
 Car se pitie de nous pourrez auiez
 Dieu en aura plus tost de vo⁹ mercis
 Vous no⁹ voies cy attaches cinq siq̄
 Quant de la char q̄ trop aus^s nourrie
 Essest pieca deuouree et pourrie
 et no⁹ les os deuenes cedres et poules
 De nre mal psonne ne sen rie (die
 Mais pes dieu q̄ to⁹ no⁹ veuille abs
 soubre.

Ses freres vo⁹ clamdes: pas ne deuez
 Auoir des daing quoy q̄ fumes occis
 Par iustice toutes fois vous scaines
 Quelq̄ hdes nōt pas bon ses rassis
 Excuses no⁹ pais que sōmes trāsis
 Envers le filz de la vierge marie
 Que sa grace ne soit pour no⁹ tarie
 No⁹ preseruāt d l'infirme fousbre
 Nous sōmes moins ame ne no⁹ harie
 Mais pes dieu q̄ to⁹ no⁹ veuille abs
 (sousbre

La pluye nous a bnes et laues
 Et le soleil deseches & noirciz
 ples corbeaux no⁹ ont les yeulx can
 et arracher la barbe les sourciz nez
 iamais nul teps no⁹ ne sommes rassis
 Puis capnis la come le vent batte
 A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie
 pl⁹ beques biseaus & deuz a coulbie
 Homme icy na point de mocquerie
 Mais pes dieu q to⁹ no⁹ vneille ab⁹

(soulbie

Prince iesus qui sur to⁹ seigneurie
 gardes quefer nait de no⁹ la maistrie
 Asup naids que faire que ne soultre
 Ne soies donc de nostre confratirie
 Mais pes dieu que tous nous vneille
 le absoulbre

The End.

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